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HOSPITALITY

Edited by

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Hospitality

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Editorial

Unnerving news about international terrorism is steadily increasing around the globe. Mutual suspicion, cut throat competition, attempts at socio-cultural domination, etc. mark life within and without many nation states. In spite of the rhetoric of globalization, our world does not become a global village, except for a massive network of communication. Globalization is truly open to market and values sustained by market interests. Even international charity has an eye on business motives. In fact, there remains little scope for virtues like benevolence and charity among societies, though they are found frequently among individuals. It is this context that justifies sustained reflections on hospitality, a virtue which usually receives scant attention in ethical and much less in theological discourse. Hospitality might be described perhaps in the simplest manner as the willingness to welcome people into our home or life, who do not ordinarily belong there.

From a theological point of view, hospitality is a solid attribute of God, as some of the essays in this issue well establish. It comes close to virtues of love and justice. The Bible contains many references to exemplary hosts including Abraham and Sarah; Ruth; Rahab; Joseph, the father of Jesus; the woman who enters an assembly of men and shows hospitality to Jesus; the Good Samaritan; the duo walking the road to Emmaus on the first day of Easter; and Jesus himself.

From an ethical perspective, especially according to the biblical tradition, acts of hospitality or inhospitality reveal the good or evil of a person or a community (Gen. 19, Judg. 19, 1 Sam. 25). The Lord himself said that Job was an upright man who feared God and turned away from evil (Job 1:1). It is said he was also hospitable. In the New Testament, hospitality is a feature of those who live as God intends. In the parable of the good Samaritan hospitality amounts to fulfilling the

command to love. Christian tradition values hospitality very much. For instance, the Rule of St. Benedict requires that all guests be received like Christ. Dante reserved a place in the lower parts of hell for inhospitable people. They don't seem to get an earnest welcome even in hell!

The current issue of *Jeevadhara* pays attention to only a few aspects of hospitality. In contemporary times hospitality gets different expressions eliciting multiple demands. One of the themes not discussed, for want of space, is ecological hospitality. Indeed it is ironic to say that we have to be hospitable to nature. For, actually we are at the table of nature being nurtured by her. But because of a tragic reversal of order nature seems to beg for our hospitality at least. It has become vulnerable at human hands.

Millions of people in India and elsewhere who seek asylum, shelter, food and employment do search for the hospitality of governments, international community and of course the church. They do not have claims or rights to merit something. The only claim they have on others is hospitality.

Emphasizing the ideal and virtue of being hospitable should not allow us to forget that being a good guest is a virtue. We do not treat this aspect in our discussions here. Being a guest basically shows your willingness to be welcomed by others. Refusal of hospitality reveals self-sufficiency and denial of dependence. Jesus has made exhortations as to how to be a good guest at wedding ceremonies, allowing the first place to others. Numerous are the occasions on which we are graciously welcomed by others into their homes, lives, thoughts and experiences. Perhaps, gratitude must be the complimentary virtue of the guests.

Mathew Illathuparampil
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Generous Imaginings: Theology of Hospitality¹

Mathew Illathuparampil

Any humane and civilized society will naturally treasure hospitality. For, it is a fruitful investment to social harmony and mutuality. But to reduce hospitality merely to a desirable social or moral virtue would impoverish its profound theological significance. In this essay, the author who is a teacher of Christian ethics, tries to bring out a theological reading of the virtue of hospitality. Focusing mostly on the implications of a hospitable God revealed in the history of Israel and manifested in the life of Jesus Christ, a theology of hospitality is attempted here. Theological explorations lead us ultimately to some inevitable ethical demands of hospitality.

Tony Campolo, an evangelical pastor, in his book *The Kingdom of God Is a Party* narrates a moving story. During one of his visits to Honolulu, suffering from jetlag, one day he woke up at 3:30 a.m. He went out to the streets looking for something to eat. He entered a tavern and ordered coffee. After a while, about nine ladies, "provocative and boisterous prostitutes" came in, as he describes. Their talk was loud and crude. He felt quite uncomfortable and was about to move out when he overheard the woman sitting next to him say, "Tomorrow's my birthday. I'm going to be 39." A companion of hers spoke rudely and asked her "what do you want from me, a birthday party?" Campolo

1 The expression 'generous imaginings' is borrowed from Elaine Scarry. Elaine Scarry, "The Difficulty of Imagining Other People", *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, ed., Martha Nussbaum (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

realized that the first woman, whose name was Agnes, had never had a birthday party in her life. He waited until all the women had left, and convinced Harry the bartender to help him throw a birthday party for Agnes. Campolo said he would arrive the next morning at 2: 30 with a cake, and decorate the place. Harry replied, "No way, the birthday cake's my thing. I'll make the cake."

By 3: 15 the next morning every prostitute in Honolulu turned up. When Agnes showed up at 3: 30 everybody screamed "Happy Birthday!" She was stunned and shaken. Then they all sang "Happy Birthday" to her. Tears welled up in her eyes. When the birthday cake with all the candles on it was brought, she openly cried. Agnes did not want to cut the cake, but to take it home promising that she would be soon back. As she left, there was heavy silence. Campolo asked: "What do you say, we pray?" After the prayer for Agnes, Harry said, "You never told me you were a preacher. What kind of church do you belong to?" Campolo answered, "I belong to a church that throws birthday parties for whores at 3: 30 in the morning."² Tony Campolo in this story represents Jesus Christ who became a host to humankind in his life on earth by receiving the poor, oppressed, sick and sinners, and eating with them.

Welcome to Strangers and Much More

Hospitality is not merely an act of kindness expressed in welcoming strangers and being nice to them. In the Bible, the original Greek word for 'hospitality' is *philo-xen-ia*, which means "love of strangers". Foreigner as indicated in its linguistic root "*foras*" is one who comes from beyond, from outside one's community. Hospitality makes us welcome the stranger into our home and life to which s/he does not originally belong. It demands an act of generous imagining from us to accept differences, plurality and diversity. Hospitality is a remarkable virtue when symptoms xenophobia - fear of strangers - are on an increase worldwide. Attempts to purify culture, language, society, employment opportunities from foreign elements and people are feverishly carried out in many parts of the world. Beyond being a

2. Tony Campolo, *The Kingdom of God Is a Party* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989) 37-39.

social virtue, hospitality enjoys a profound theological import. This essay is an attempt to identify the theological meaning of hospitality from different angles.

Hospitality is laden with theological significance. For, it has a primordial reference to God and Jesus Christ in different ways. We find reflections of it already in the Old Testament. Hospitality is often associated with the promise and blessings of God. In Genesis 18, Abraham shows hospitality to three guests, one of whom is the Lord. And the Lord promises Abraham a son. In Joshua 2, Rahab offers protection and lodging to Israelite spies, demonstrating her loyalty to Israel's God. The widow of Zerephath provides hospitality for Elijah when facing starvation herself in 1 Kings 17, prompting God to provide for her. We shall explain further the rootedness of hospitality

In the case of Jesus the environment of hospitality plays a significant theological role. It is well expressed in the symbol of meal in Jesus's ministry. Perhaps, the single most important metaphor of hospitality could be a meal. The meal element is strongly present in the life of Jesus as a theological representation. Two claims can be made in this regard. First, in Luke's gospel Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal. Apart from the many references to Jesus' table fellowship, mention of food and meal are found in less obvious places also. Peter's first encounter with Jesus occurs through the medium of fish (Lk 5: 1-11). After resurrection Jesus offers reconciliation and peace to Peter and others before they share a meal of baked fish (Lk 24: 36-43). Secondly, according to Luke, Jesus got himself killed because of the way he ate. He ate with sinners and announced the coming of the reign of God in the symbolism of banquets.³ Given the political and historical sensibilities of the Palestine of Jesus' time, we can sense that by linking meals with the reign of God Jesus was triggering a confounding of set boundaries and a silent revolution. While meals were supposed to be part of household hospitality, Jesus linked it with the reign of God. Actually, agriculture, trade, taxation and land were issues thought to be the domain of the reign of God (or the king in secular context). But Jesus transgressed this pattern by the

3. Robert J. Karris, *Eating Your Way through Luke's Gospel* (Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press, 2006) 97.

simple symbol of meals. It was offensive to many, for it amounted to a certain reversal of socio-political and religious powers. Briefly, acts, message and symbols of hospitality were not merely part of friendly social living for Jesus.

The theological sense of hospitality presumes that hospitality basically refers to God. It does so in two ways: God as a stranger or a potential guest and God as a host. The concrete manifestations of these aspects are found in the life and message of Jesus. Both these aspects reveal also how hospitality comes closer to the core of Christian faith and practices. That makes hospitality as an ethical demand for believers in Christ. In the first part of this essay, we shall explore how God is the object and subject of hospitality, with special mention of its manifestation in Jesus. Secondly, we make mention of the ethical demands of hospitality.

I. God the Stranger

It might be strange to speak about God as the stranger. But it looks that just as God acts like a host (as we shall explain below), God also shares the fate of being a stranger in the world. It happens so at least in two ways. First, being the Lord of Israel, God became a sojourner along with them; secondly, in the person of Jesus, God assumed the strange human nature.

1.1. God: The Lord of the Strangers

It is oft repeated in the Old Testament that "I Am the Lord Your God." That assurance occurs a dozen times in Leviticus 19. They are the very first words of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:2. A little historical awareness would enable any sensible Israelite to complete this sentence: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt where you were aliens." Therefore, briefly, "I am the Lord your God" seems to operate as shorthand expression for I am Yahweh who acted as your God while you were oppressed aliens in Egypt and saved you. For, the Lord of Israel was an involved God, not a distant figure.

Being strange people in Egypt and sojourners in the desert was a deep cut mark in the heart of Israel. It seemed to have defined their identity and subsequently their ethos. Being not at home is a heavy experience which Israel had to endure in its history for a long time. It

is well typified right from the experience of the patriarchs and leaders and later in their collective existence in Egyptian slavery. Abraham of Ur called out of the homeland of his fathers to travel to a foreign land that God has promised (Gen. 12:1-3). Sold by his brothers, Joseph had to live as a stranger in Egypt. The Israelites who grew into multitudes in Egypt lived as “foreign” slaves. Moses led these aliens, through the wilderness for forty years, living on God’s miraculous provision of quail and manna. Judah’s exile in Babylon is another chapter in the collective psyche of God’s people. In short, Israel’s identity was continually defined and reshaped through the experience of being a stranger and a sojourner. It meant a lot of things to them. Perhaps, above all, it meant for them being vulnerable to others and depending on God’s provisions totally. It was such an experience of being aliens that served as the basis of their gratitude, obedience, and hope in God. These religious feelings get their solid and theological expressions in many of the psalms. The Lord of Israel never remained a stranger to this uprooted people.

1.2. God: A Stranger in the World in Jesus Christ

God in the person of Jesus Christ became a stranger in the world. The very act of incarnation can be described as an act of God assuming a strange humanness. Human nature is not innate to divine being. It was freely chosen in Jesus Christ. In addition to this, human existence of Jesus Christ amounted practically to being an alien in this world. For, he was always dependent on the hospitality of others. He was a guest par excellence! Luke 2:7 says, “They wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for him in the inn.” In Luke 9:58 Jesus exclaims: “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” As he and his disciples traveled through Judea and Samaria, they depended on the hospitality of others, both men and women (Matt. 10: 11ff; Luke 10: 5ff).

Jesus experienced the vulnerability and rejection which are usually due to any stranger. For example, in Matthew 25: 31-46, Jesus identifies himself with a “stranger” (xenos). Jesus divides the sheep from the goats, and he says to the sheep, “I was a stranger, and you welcomed me... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my

brothers, you did it to me.” Hospitality toward fellow people, even “the least of these my brothers”, is a demonstration of love toward him.

If we enter into the inner life of Jesus, we may detect moments of strangeness and vulnerability that he felt even while he moved with his apostles and companions. More often than not his disciples failed to share his world and views. They did not even understand him. Sometimes he appeared strange even to his parents, Mary and Joseph. For example, having found Jesus in the temple of Jerusalem after three days of feverish search, his mother asked him, son why did you do it to us (Lk 2: 48)? His close associates did not follow his logic of the cross. So he had to admonish them many a time. On the cross Jesus went through the most heart rending experience of being a stranger in the world; betrayed, beaten and forsaken by all, apparently also by God the father. Jesus on the cross had nothing in common to the world around him. He had even been made naked already, snatching from him the last piece of his common thread with the world. No human being must have experienced a harsher experience of being thrown to the abyss of vulnerability. These were, in human terms, the moments of God undergoing the experience of being a stranger in the world in Jesus Christ.

1.3. God the Host

God is not only a stranger or a potential guest in the world, but he is also the supreme host. Being a guest and host at the same time reveals the marvelous paradox of divinity. Numerous are the examples illustrating the hospitable character of God. Each historical act of God from creation onwards can be read as acts of hospitality. For, they represent his bounteous grace. Salvation also is a graceful and equally hospitable act of God. Paul says, “By grace are you saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). The ultimate foundation of Christian hospitality is God’s continuous commitment to gratuitously communicate His grace.

The graceful and therefore hospitable acts of God take place in historical events initiated by God. Perhaps the most momentous event of divine hospitality in the history of Israel was exodus. God came forward to rescue Israel from the refugee camps of Egypt and led them home to the land flowing with milk and honey. The reason for

this hospitable intervention of God is well summarized by the prophet: “Then I thought [says the Lord] I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they dwelt” (Ezekiel 20: 8–9). It shows that God owns his people, especially in the alien land. “Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider thy wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of thy steadfast love, but rebelled against the Most High at the Red Sea. Yet he saved them for his name’s sake, that he might make known his mighty power” (Psalm 106: 6–8).

In the words of prophet Isaiah God uses the language of a perfect host: “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is. 55:1). These words are later being echoed by Jesus when he said: “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him” (Jn 7: 37–38).

1.4. Jesus the Host

The supreme act of God’s hospitality took place in the person of Jesus Christ. He realized on earth that God is a warm host. The most profound way in which Jesus offered hospitality was offering his disciples an abode, a home to belong to.

In many passages of the gospels we find Jesus enjoying the moments of being a guest. There are a few instances recorded where Jesus actually acts as host. Feeding the hungry with multiplication of the bread is an explicit example of it (Mt 14: 13–21). But in the last supper Jesus becomes the ultimate and unique host. He offers himself to be broken and shed as their food and drink. In the early church partaking of the Eucharistic meal gave the believers a sense of identity, belonging to the house of God. Jesus Christ died for sinners to make everyone who believes a member of the household of God. We are no longer strangers and sojourners. We have come home to God. Everybody who trusts in Jesus finds a home in God. “So then you (Gentiles) are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the

saints and members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19). Opening the household of God meant reconciliation with God and one another.

In Jesus the hospitality of God gets new meanings. Jesus invites the sinners, the lowly and the marginalized into the Kingdom of God. Lucien Richard describes the household, or reign of God as a verb that signifies God's activity - God being with us and God in relation.⁴ Jesus' style of hospitality represents a great reversal of power. Jesus was fond of using the imagery of banquet to suggest God's kingdom. Jesus demanded his disciples to invite others who cannot repay them into the banquet of our life.

In short, surveying the already mentioned biblical texts, it seems that hospitality functions as a theological indication of the way God acts in the world. It carries a close affinity to the working of God. In the historical unfolding of the history of salvation, the theme of hospitality expands itself, the subjects and objects of hospitality change, the role of the host and guest interchange.... In the history of salvation, there are unexpected hosts and guests, challenging our notions of whom God welcomes and whom God finds hospitable. For instance, Ruth, an ancestor of Jesus, provides hospitality to Naomi and receives hospitality from Boaz. She is a Moabite, not a Hebrew, one of the ethnic groups rejected in older Scriptures because of their lack of hospitality. Rahab, a prostitute who is also an ancestor of Jesus, is rewarded with protection after she shows more appropriate hospitality to Joshua and his men. Jesus taught the parable of the Good Samaritan to narrate the meaning of neighborly love. The expression of love which Jesus chose in that parable was more of hospitality than anything else.

2. Ethical Demands of Hospitality

Hospitality of God does not remain an empty concept in the biblical tradition. It elicits powerful ethical demands. It is manifest in many ways in biblical literature. The Old Testament people drew most of their ethical duties originally from the center of who God was. Hospitality represents one of such values of God demanding corresponding values from His people. 'I am the Lord your God who made a home for you and brought you there with all my might and all my soul. Therefore,

4. Lucien Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000) 39, 55.

you shall love the stranger as yourself. You shall be holy as I am holy (Leviticus 19:1). The identity of God's people as once strangers is something they are asked to remember always. The God-centered motivation for hospitality is more explicit in the following text, Leviticus 19:33-34: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."

Protect Strangers

Strangers appear in the list of the most vulnerable people in the Old Testament along with the widows and orphans. "The way to appropriate the revelation of the God who favored his people in their - figurative - "strangerhood, widowhood, and orphanhood" was a favor to the stranger, the widow, and the orphan. It resulted in the values of a communitarian, just, and merciful way of life being enshrined in the covenant with Yahweh."⁵ The book of Exodus explicitly demands it: "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry" (22:21).

Israel's experience of being foreigners in Egypt later became the basis of a moral duty to understand the needs of strangers in their midst. That they received the hospitality of God became the foundation of their duty to offer that same hospitality to others. Israel maintained laws protecting the stranger and alien (Ex. 23:9, Deut. 10:19). Judges were commanded to deal impartially between aliens and Israelites (Dt. 1:16, 24: 17). Cities of refuge were open to aliens and native-borns alike (Num. 35:15; Josh. 20:9). Travellers were also classed with widows, orphans, and the poor as deserving the community's provision and just treatment (Ex. 22:21-24, Dt. 24:17-18). In the words of Lucien Richard, Israel's memory of being wanderers in the wilderness and provided for only by God's hospitality "encourages a diaspora ethics of itinerancy, detachment, dispossession, solidarity, and endurance in suffering, rather than a homeland ethics of stability, engagement,

5. John O'Brien, *Theology and the Option for the Poor* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 122.

acquisition, and human fulfillment in the present life.”⁶ It cannot be overlooked that protection of aliens was not a moral duty found exclusively in the Old Testament. The ancient Near Eastern Literature also make mention of it, though for different motives.⁷

Detached Approach to the World

In the New Testament, the duty of hospitality gets multiple expressions and demands. St. Peter in his first letter reminds early Christians of their earthly existence also referring to their being strangers: “To God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia” (1: 1). It enables them to remember that they are not to be strongly tied to this world and its goods. They are people living by the grace and hospitality of others and they are supposed to show hospitality to others. Paul reminds us saying, “Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality” (Rom 12: 13). The verbal form implies continuous action. It is a constant attitude and practice. 1 Peter 4: 8-9 says, “Above all hold your unfailing love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another.” Hebrews 13:1-2 teaches in the same spirit, “Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

Hospitality as an Identity of the Church

Responsibility to the stranger is an essential component of the identity and witness of the faith-community or the church. We have many illustrations of it in the bible. First and perhaps the foremost, in the scene of the last judgment, Jesus identifies himself with the strangers (Matt. 25:31-46). Welcome given to the strangers is an explicit act of hospitality. Secondly, on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-25) we find the reversal of the role of stranger and guest in the breaking of the bread. The disciples showed signs of hospitality to the stranger that they met on the way. Thirdly, in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) hospitality to the injured man equals to offering him

6. Lucien Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God*, 79.

7. For a comparative work see, F. Charles Fensham, “Widow, Orphan, and the Poor in the Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature”, in Frederick E. Greenspahn, ed., *Essential Papers on Israel and the Ancient Near East* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1991) 176-192.

his own possessions, money, care and time. Fourthly, Paul places hospitality as the common virtue that unites the church as “family” or “household of God” in its early mission and expansion. For, it was a fellowship of strangers united in Christ. St. Peter also holds the same notion, namely, those formerly outcast are now welcomed as the elect and privileged people of God. It shows that hospitality belongs to the identity and ethical responsibility of Christian communities. One of the qualities of the elders of the church Paul wanted was hospitality (Tit 1: 8). Virtues of exemplary widows are enumerated by Paul. They include hospitality also (1 Tim. 5:10). Final exhortations in the letter to the Hebrews include reference to the virtue of hospitality. It also mentions a reward mentioning the Genesis story of Abraham treating the messengers of Yhwh (Hebrews 13: 2). Pauls’ mission journeys were marked by acts of hospitality offered to him (Acts 16:15 & 34; 21: 8; 28: 2 & 7). Briefly, hospitality is not merely a personal virtue rather it goes to the heart of being a church.

Hospitality Equals to Justice

Hospitality is not a pious virtue. Hospitality means at the core not only welcoming strangers, but also doing justice. In Deut. 10: 18 the protection of the poor and despised is linked with the Supreme Judge, Yahweh, who is not willing to accept bribery, but willing to do justice to widow, orphan, and ger (stranger). This text is the basis for all the later stipulations in this group. In Deut. 14: 28-29 the command is that widow and poor must be allowed to feast on the tithes. In 16: 11, 14 the Israelite receives the command to let the widow, orphan and ger partake in his feasts.⁸ In 27:19 a person who abused the rights of ger, widow, and orphan is cursed. Every time the message is given, Yhwh does justice to this group and everybody has to do likewise.

Jesus gives hints of justice-informed hospitality in his parable of the prodigal son. In that story, the father shows hospitality to both the sons, to the elder one and the younger one who returned after squandering his inheritance. He welcomes joyfully the lost son. He

8. Robert North, *Sociology of the Biblical Jubilee* (1954) 118-119., as cited in F.Charles Fensham, “Widow, Orphan, and the Poor in the Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature”, James L. Crenshaw, ed., *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1976) 161-171, 167.

encourages the elder son to be hospitable to his brother. This is God's way of doing justice, namely, inviting men and women to God's mercy.

From Tolerance to Hospitality

In social life what we need today is to move from tolerance to hospitality. It requires us to respect various kinds of diversity and maintain a spirit of constant dialogue.⁹ Current society has to be more hospitable to different religious choices and voices. "The accepting of hospitality is not just restricted to eating and drinking... but includes what is most precious to our neighbors: prayer and worship."¹⁰ A gospel oriented society has to develop hospitality as a culture. Interpreting the Torah that emphasizes fraternity and hospitality, Jacques Derrida declares that "hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others."¹¹ That means, hospitality is a fundamental way of dwelling on this earth. "That a people should accept those who come and settle among them even though they are foreigners with their own customs and clothes, their own way of speaking, their own smell that a people should give them an *akhsaniah*, such as a place the inn, and the wherewithal to breathe and live is a song to the glory of the God of Israel."¹² This way of life cannot be unknown to the church. What the church requires more perhaps would be a 'generous imagining' towards diversities found in non-Catholics, other religions, dissenting theological opinions, truth-seekers, peoples' movements, etc. Theological reflections on hospitality are bound to generate and lead to inalienable ethical demands on individual Christians as well as the church as a whole. For, we believe in a hospitable God, not just in a tolerant God!

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9. David M. McCarthy, *The Heart of Catholic Social Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009) 172-173.
 10. Joseph Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003) 100.
 11. Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans., M. Dooley & R. Kearney (New York: Routledge, 2005) 16.
 12. Emmanuel Levinas, as quoted in Derrida's speech at Levinas' funeral. *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999) 72.

God's Compassionate Hospitality: A Challenge to Christian Ethics

George Therukattil

Hospitality can very well serve as an ethical principle and a Christian virtue. In his article George Therukattil MCBS, eminent ethicist and former Chairman of the department of Christianity, University of Mysore, argues for a Christian ethic of compassionate hospitality. In this attempt, he explains how God's compassion represents His hospitality. He further confirms his stance that hospitality is an ethical principle with the help of the 'optics of ethics' developed by Emmanuel Levinas. It leads us to recognize God's self-emptying and compassionate hospitality that summons us to break through all boundaries by religion, caste and nationality to offer generous and compassionate hospitality for the down-trodden and suffering.

Re-imagining God's compassion as His hospitality inviting us His children to join the community of His Kingdom and re-viewing it through the optics of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, I would like to present it as a challenge to Christian ethics for building a fraternal world.

I. God's compassion

"Be compassionate, just as your heavenly Father is compassionate". The first characteristic of the triune God in the New Testament is compassion, a real self-emptying (kenosis) within the heart of God.

The biblical word **compassion** has more to do with suffering. In fact, the word literally means *cum + passio* = suffer with. God's compassionate action throughout history sets the stage for Jesus, who allowed himself to be moved by what he saw to perform acts of mercy and justice. It was the motive of his preaching good news to the poor and down-trodden, his associating with sinners and outcasts, his healings and miracles and his raising the dead and his associating with the sinners and outcasts. In Jesus God made His own our hunger and thirst, our loneliness and death. With us He underwent the pain and humiliation of being oppressed and persecuted. The passion and death of Jesus was a faint reflection of the compassion of God.

II. God's Hospitality

Hospitality can be envisaged as the loving reception and care of strangers and guests. Biblically and theologically, the term 'hospitality' is not limited to receiving a stranger into our homes – although it surely includes this dimension. Fundamentally, it is a core attitude toward others, 'creation of free space' for them at the cost of self-emptying.¹ Philosophically, it means unlocking and opening up one's own intimacy... to the strange other. The house (residence) is the condition for hospitality, it is the space "wherein flesh is opened up to the word".² Envisioning it thus, God's lavish and even 'outrageous and scandalous hospitality' is what we experience when we contemplate the compassionate action of the triune God towards a world riddled with suffering. Triune God is a permanent process of self-donation in self-emptying and generous hospitality. Each person in the Trinity is for the other, with the other and in the other making room for the other. The mystery of Triune God can only be fathomed in forms of self-emptying (*kenosis*), compassionate hospitality: "the Father's self-utterance in the generation of the Son is an initial 'kenosis', within the Godhead

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- 1 Daniel Harrington, *The Church according to the New Testament*, Oxford: Sheed and Ward Book, 2001, p.138
 - 2 E. Levinas, *Difficult Freedom. Essays on Judaism*, trans. S. Hand, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990, p.126.

that underpins all subsequent kenosis. For the Father strips himself, without remainder, of his Godhead and hands it over to the Son... Inherent in the Father's love is an absolute renunciation: he will not be God for himself alone. He lets go of his divinity... he cannot be God in any other way but in this 'kenosis' within the Godhead itself."³

III. God's Compassion as His Hospitality

If compassion is what constitutes God's very being, his deepest depth, then, God is hospitality – making space for the other – by his very being. Understood this way, the whole of creation-act of God begins as an outpouring of God's desire to draw more creatures into His communion. It is itself an act of hospitality - God inviting us into His divine communion. And even when we, His creatures, rejected that offer of hospitality, God's response in Jesus was to sacrifice Himself so that our communion with Him could be restored. The mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption are sacraments of the visible expression of the hospitality and self-emptying within God. The Second Person of divine Trinity became a human being; entered into the human condition through a conception and birth, becoming the offspring of a genealogy reaching back to Adam; lived in a human body, weak and mortal, made no attempt to conceal the weaknesses of his body, or to be exempt from them. Indeed, here was a God willing to be nailed to a cross like a slave (Phil 2:7-8).⁴ He abandons His Godhood, and enters the stinking slum of sinful humanity. Redemption shows the cost God had to pay to keep His invitation of hospitality open. All this is the madness of a God who is compassionate hospitality itself.

IV. God's Hospitality as Displayed in Jesus

God's hospitality is displayed in Jesus when Jesus enters into the condition of the victims and accepts an abasement, so low that, even he, has to raise the cry raised by the people of God since the days of

3 Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama* in 5 Volumes, trans. Graham Harrison, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994, Vol. 4, pp.323-325

4 J. Comblin, *Being Human: A Christian Anthropology*, New York: Orbis Books, 1990. p.60

the Exodus.⁵ It is displayed most especially in the life and misery of Jesus as a 'visit' to the world, seeking hospitality. The One who came as visitor and guest becomes the host and offers a hospitality in which the entire world can participate - the communion banquet of God's Kingdom.⁶

The Gospel of Luke approaches the life, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus through the interpretative key of 'hospitality', by lingering upon scenes where the theme of 'hospitality' is particularly prominent: His lowly birth in a manger, his itinerant preaching and final burial in the private tomb of Joseph Arimathea bracket Jesus' life as an exemplary recipient of hospitality, a life that relies on the good will and hospitality of many.⁷ In ironic fashion, Jesus the 'homeless' guest becomes Jesus the host, the agent of God's redemptive hospitality. Jesus often breaks with conventions by entering into suspect homes, failing to wash, and rebuking hosts in order to embrace outsiders, the oppressed and the marginalized.⁸ "At considerable cost of diminished honour, those of status and wealth are instructed by Jesus to extend hospitality and share material resources precisely with persons who cannot reciprocate. In fact, Jesus practices a policy of hospital so radical that he offends the righteous (Lk 7:33-34; 36-50). There is room (space) within the company gathered around Jesus for those who find themselves on the margins of the community because of a wide range of circumstances: demonic oppression, age, gender, poverty, occupation (toll-collection), moral and religious failures (sinners)."⁹

The scene of the cure of a leper (Lk 5:12-16) manifests the outreach of God's hospitality most dramatically. When the prevailing religious law banished lepers to the margins of society, Jesus stretches out his

5 Id, *Cry of the oppressed, Cry of Jesus*, New York: Orbis Books, 1988, p. 224.

6 Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel*, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 200, p.75

7 *Ibid.*, p.4

8 Amos Young, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor. Faith Meets Faith series*, New York: Orbis Books, 2008.

9 John T Carroll, "Luke Acts in *The New Testament Today*, ed. Mark Allen Powell, Westminster: John Knox Press 1999, p.62

hand and touches him – a remarkable gesture of hospitality breaking of all frontiers of physical, moral and spiritual leprosy. Hardly any other scene in the Gospel illustrates the theme of hospitality and inhospitality as the one in the house of Simon, the Pharisee (Lk 7:36-50). In Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, the principal lesson is hospitality in a most extravagant manner.¹⁰

Jesus' institution of the Eucharist providing his body and blood to his disciples (Lk 22:14-20) and his self-emptying and 'being broken' on the Cross to become 'the Bread of life' were supreme manifestations of hospitality. After resurrection, Jesus' 'breaking bread' with the disciples on the way to Emmaus and putting on meals for them on the shore (Lk 24:13-30; Jn 21:4-12) were again examples of great hospitality.¹¹ To the notion of the shared fellowship-meals Jesus adds the important concept of hospitality.¹²

V. The Kingdom of God and Hospitality

The Gospels exhort us to self-emptying and radical hospitality (Lk 16:19-31; 19:1-10) and promises to those who show it, the new communion of God's Kingdom, which is analogous to an open frontier, and which breaks in on meals and on the reception of strangers, poor and needy. In the parable of the 'Rich man and Lazarus', it is the rich man's lack of hospitality that created the great chasm between himself and God's Kingdom (symbolized by Abraham's bosom) of which Lazarus is a part. The new communion of God's Kingdom often turns out to be both cause and consequence of hospitality. Fundamental to such hospitality is a community that expresses itself as the guests of God. Hospitality becomes generative of a new humanity, a new way of existing. "To evangelize was to invite others (hospitality) to become a part of this new community, and to begin a life of freedom and communion."¹³ Hospitality poses the fundamental question of using wealth and possession which in themselves are neither good, nor bad.

10 Byrne Brendan, *The Hospitality of God*....Op. cit., pp. 59, 73, 101,102..

11 *Ibid.*, p. 49,

12 Robert J Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies*, Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 1998, p. 87.

13 J. Comblin, *Being Human...* Op. cit., p. 25

The danger of them is challenged by the demand of hospitality. While one must own wealth in order to offer hospitality, hospitality protects one from abusing wealth and gives one friends and honor for eternity (Lk 16:1-13).¹⁴

VI. Emmanuel Levinas' Metaphysical Ethics

For Emmanuel Levinas 'ethics is an optics' because ethics happens literally, before our eyes, as the face of the other before us calls into question and begins as a vision, through which we intuit our ethical responsibility for the other.¹⁵ In his main work: *Totality and Infinity*¹⁶ Levinas indicts traditional Western philosophy's indifference to the ethical and its 'totalizing of the other' with its uncritical reliance on vast concepts, such as Hegel's 'Spirit', or Heidegger's 'Being', which assimilate countless individuals to rational processes, thus negating their individuality and denying the ethical face-to-face reality in which we - philosophers included - interact with persons different from ourselves. This 'face-to-face' realm is not the same thing as the realm of abstract concepts. It possesses its own texture which is primarily an ethical one. In this domain we are challenged by "the sheer otherness of the other person, which is what makes him/her other". Ethics "is not a branch of philosophy, but first philosophy" as there is an *oughtness* operative in existence before *is* (being). "Prior to the unveiling of Being in general, as the basis of knowledge and meaning of Being, there is a relationship with the existent. Before the ontological level is the ethical level. Ethics (as the non-cognitive realm, which cannot be reduced to representational intentionality) is therefore metaphysics."¹⁷

Levinas' main work is a plea for becoming human founded on ethical relation between self and the other, freed from neutrality of being and from the overpowering totality. Fulfillment of humans consists in relating to the other, neither as an object, nor as another myself. In the former relation the self is exploitative of the other and in the latter relation as

14 John T Carroll, *Op. cit.*, p.62

15 S. Sekar Sebastian, "Ethical Foundations of Consciousness in Levinas" in *Suvidhya: Journal of Philosophy and Religion*, Vol.3, no.1, June, 2009, p.25

16 E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. by A. Lingis, The Hague/Boston/London : Martinus Nijhoff, 1979

17 E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity Op. cit.*, p.48

the other is *thought* by the self as someone equal like him becomes an object of thought and thereby reducing the irreducibility and infinity of the other by the self's thought or representation. This in turn is doing injustice to the other as the other is unique, infinite and irreducible in his being-other. Fulfillment of humans or communion, according to Levinas, consists only in the relation of the self as servant and the other as Master or in substitution of self for the other, in losing of the self in the ethically qualified proximity of an intimacy (hospitality) with the other which annuls the infinite distance between the self and the other. Levinas calls this 'the caress of proximity' that "not only protects the direct presence of the other but likewise preserves the radical distance from the other and even deepens it."¹⁸ Proximity to the other is thus acknowledging and enjoying the alterity of the other and at the same time suffering by means of the other, or rather because of the other: an affliction that is compassion.¹⁹

VII. Levinas' Ethics of Hospitality

Levinas develops his ethics of hospitality with the dynamics of relationship, the self for the other which consists in receiving the other, as hospitality. "Subjectivity goes to the point of substitution for the other."²⁰ To be oneself is to be rooted in the other and 'ensouled' by the other.²¹ "I am in my very existence for the other"²² In substitution one explodes and gives oneself for the other and goes beyond ones own death, takes upon ones shoulders the fate of the other; even to the point of self-denial and the sacrifice of substitutional suffering and dying.²³ Levinas formulates this in a paradoxical manner by affirming

18 Roger Burggraeve, *Proximity With the Other*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2009, p.63

19 E. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. A. Lingis, The Hague/Boston/London: Nijhoff (Kluser), 1981, pp. 69-90

20 Id., *Totality and Infinity Op. cit.*, p.100

21 Id., *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, trans. B. Berg, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, pp.13-14

22 Id., *Otherwise than Being or Being Beyond Essence*, Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991, p.114

23 Id., *Humanism of the Other*, trans. N. Poller, Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006, p. 98

that true ethically living subject can be recognized by the fact that it chooses to undergo injustice over committing wrong, and that it fears its own death less than being the murderer of the other.²⁴ "This unconditional goodness, moreover, is marked by the desire to surpass itself more and more in goodness. To the extent that I take up my responsibility for the needy, suffering and mortal other, the desire grows within me to substantiate even more and develop that goodness."²⁵ Self as substitution concerns a passive dynamism, namely a 'disturbing' ethical event that happens to me which summons me to consecrate, to dedicate to the other-than-myself in spite of myself. Symbolically an authentic self is one, which takes bread out of his mouth to nourish the hunger of another with his own fasting. The perfect figure for substitution given by Levinas is that of a mother who gives food to her children by her own fasting or that of phoenix bird that breaks itself for its chicks or that of Jesus the Atoner, the man-for-the-other.

It is J. Derrida who has identified the ethical dynamics of Levinas between self and other; the welcome of the other and receiving of the other by losing the self or substituting the self for the other as the ethics of hospitality.²⁶

a) Hospitable Self and Other

Hospitality always suggests two participants: host and guest - self and other. Levinas' location of the self in the face of the other is most helpful for showing the relation between hospitable self and other. The face is that which is common to all humans and yet it is our face which uniquely marks each one distinct from all other humans. Community and individuality are seen in one feature. Furthermore, it is two faces that meet when the self encounters the other. The hospitable self, briefly put, is the face of one who is faced by the other and begged to extend a gracious hospitality. The very being of self is constituted by the encounter with the other. According to Levinas, the other is manifested through his/her *face*, and thus it is the *epiphany* of the

24 Id., *Totality and Infinity...* *Op. cit.*, 222, 224

25 Roger Burggraeve, *Proximity with the Other*, *Op. cit.*, p.49

26 J. Derrida, *Adieu Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. by P. Brault and M. Naës, 1999, California: Stanford University Press, 1999.

other. The unmediated and accompanying presence of the other takes place through other's *glance* and *word*. The other *looks* at me and we stand face-to-face, and speaks to me in the form of an appeal. Since it is a phenomenological 'looking' and 'speaking', it is not carried out with eyes and lips: "...blind and mute persons can also 'look' at me, 'regard' me and 'speak' to me."²⁷ Through the glance and word, the other is present to me; I am *touched* by this presence. This touching presence of the other accompanies me wherever I go, *animating* and *inspiring* me.²⁸

The relationship between the self and the other (Ethical proximity), for Levinas, is marked by a dynamic of 'desire', 'insatiable compassion'²⁹ for the other and "it is a desire beyond satisfaction" in the sense that it infinitises itself into an unquenchable desire that is marked by a fullness that is never content with itself, but with the paradoxical joy of the 'poverty of its wealth' that cares for and give to the other: "an incessant solicitude for solicitude,"³⁰ It is the miracle of infinitising goodness of desire, 'love without eros'³¹ or agapeic love.³² Desire unlike a 'need', does not identify a term or an end. This endless desire for what is beyond is Being...is transcendence – a desire for the good."³³ Levinas calls this 'miracle of the human': "I am as such marked by the other that has lodged in me a 'different movement' than self-interest, whereby I feel drawn away in an 'extra-verse' movement out of myself towards the other".³⁴ It is the infinitising

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- 27 Adriaan Peperzak, *To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*, West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue university Press, 1993, p.164.
- 28 E. Levinas, *Of God Comes to Mind*, trans. B. Bergo, Stanford: Stanford university Press, 1998, pp.13-14
- 29 Id., *Humanism of the Other*, trans. N. Poller, Urbana & Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2006, p.94
- 30 Id., *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, *Op. cit.*, p73
- 31 *Ibid.*, p.68
- 32 Roger Burggraeve, *Proximity with the Other... Op. cit.*, p.55.
- 33 E. Levinas, "God and Philosophy" trans. By R. Cohen, in *Philosophy Today* xii 2/4, 1978, p.135
- 34 Roger Burggraeve, *Proximity with the Other*, *Op. cit.*, p.69

(infinition) of goodness, or the 'making unselfish' of my selfishness.³⁵ Desire for the good draws the self towards the other. Yet, it does not assimilate the other into sameness with the self, just as a truly gracious host does not coerce the guest.³⁶ As Levinas writes: "The other metaphorically is not 'other' like the bread I eat, the land in which I dwell, the landscape I contemplate, like, sometimes myself for myself, this: 'I' that 'other' I can 'feed' on these realities and to a great extent satisfy myself, as though I had simply been lacking them. Their *alterity* is thereby reabsorbed into my own identity as a thinker or a possessor. The metaphorical desire is toward *something else entirely*, toward the absolutely other."³⁷ And this desire turned into being-for-the-other ultimately, turns the self from its interiority towards a radical hospitality toward other. The hospitable self marks this concept of self by certain practices which embody a concern for the other over the self. It is the other that makes the self a communal being, not the self's need for social contact or personal relationships. "Neighbor concerns me before all assumption, all commitment consented to or refused... It is not because the neighbor would be recognized as belonging to the same genus as me that he concerns me. He is precisely other. The community with him begins in my obligation to him. The neighbor is a brother."³⁸ We meet him with giving and serving hands. The encounter calls us to respond with a hospitality that must 'become flesh' in the hands that give, in the body that takes concrete steps and does tangible deeds.³⁹

b) The Place of Hospitality

The hospitable self, constituted in an encounter with the other must be localized in a particular place and context in which the encounter occurs. For Levinas, the hospitable self is localized at home where food and shelter are offered. Levinas writes: "No human or inter-

35 Ibid., pp. 49-50

36 Graham Ward, *Barth, Derrida, and the Language of Theology*, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 165.

37 E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity...* *Op. cit.*, p. 33

38 Id., *Otherwise than Being...* *Op. cit.*, p. 87.

39 Roger Burggraeve, *Proximity with the Other* *Op. cit.*, p.51

human relationship can be enacted outside of economy. No face can be approached with empty hand and closed home. Recollection in a home to the other" is the basis of hospitality.⁴⁰ The encounter with the other in a particular place calls us to respond with an invitation. This invitation should be an act of justice on behalf of the other who is before me. The framework of hospitality routes this encounter in particular place, sphere, community but the result of the encounter should always be a just invitation or action for the sake of the other. Locating hospitality in the home suggests an intimacy and vulnerability when faced with inviting the other. The home is the place where life happens. Welcoming a stranger into home always risks the possibility that the stranger could take the very life of the host. But there is also the possibility that without this invitation, the stranger will die. Hospitality is a delicate gift of life itself.

VIII. God's compassion and His Hospitality as Challenge to Christian Ethics

Pursuing Levinas' concept of self as substitute, which loses itself in the face of the other and responsible for the other is most helpful for developing a radical ethics of self-emptying and compassionate hospitality. Participation in the hospitality of God's Kingdom-community must begin and end in the compassion and hospitality of God. Biblical God is a compassionate and hospitable God, 'who is moved' precisely because He is touched and affected by what happens to people, literally..... vulnerable in what people undergo. Out of this idea of a 'sensitive' and hospitable God, we gain insight into the foundation and inspiration for a Christian ethics of compassionate hospitality. Self always stands before the Absolute Other, to whom the self is and must be given. Therefore, the hospitality of God on behalf of creation is understood to extend beyond the interiority of the self and take seriously the exterior places and communities where the other is encountered. In the Christian affirmation of creation *ex nihilo*, the being of the cosmos is called into existence by the One who is radically other. It is in this encounter the self is born. Therefore the hospitable self is not an isolated autonomous individual, but constantly permeated by the other while both parties retain separation.

To say that communion (Kingdom of God) understood in terms of the hospitable self is communal rather than individual emphasizes the deep implication for selfhood, uniqueness and welcome we find in hospitality. The hospitable self is never isolated but always faced with the other. Therefore, the communities in which the self participates and finds identity cannot be disconnected from persons. 'I' am not without 'the other'. In hospitality the center of gravity lies neither in the home nor in the stranger, neither in the host nor in the guest, but in the God of both who is discovered redemptively in their meeting.⁴¹ In the presence of God, the other does not exist for the satisfaction of the self. Rather, the other calls the self to an ethical response.

Gospel inspired ethics of hospitality can only be a 'sensitive ethics' meaning to say an ethics that has everything to do with being moved by the joys and sorrows of people and by what touches them in their 'heart'. With this we place a very different accent on the ethical passion than the active and intentional drivenness towards the object of our own endeavors. "The word 'drivenness' should here rather be understood literally as being driven by the 'other than myself'. I am moved by the epiphany of the other, whereby I am put in motion, in spite of myself. Even before we actively take on our commitment for the other, we are moved and put in motion particularly by the other's vulnerability and affliction; we are literally affected ('ad-fected'). This passion forms the primary ethical foundation of every Christian being, speaking and acting... The suffering that afflicts the other, who is abandoned 'half-dead' and 'bereft' along the path, does not touch us 'spiritually' in spite of our body, but precisely in and through our body and its sensitivity."⁴²

This 'sensitivity' need to be understood strictly as 'vulnerability' in the passive sense of the word, and not primarily as an active positioning or even less as an attitude of openness for the other. It is passive: the bearing of the other is a bearing even of the passion and suffering of the other. It implies likewise the 'birth pangs' that it entails, precisely because it is a bodily bearing, a bodily 'com-passion', 'groaning of the

41 Thomas E. Reynold, *Vulnerable communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality*, Grand Rapids, Minnesota: Brazos Books, 2008, p. 243.

42 Roger Burggraeve, "A Christian Inter-Human Ethics..." *Art. cit.*, p.155

entrails'.⁴³ The openness for the 'need' of the other is to come about as the result of a gift of 'conversion'. Also this sensitivity is not to be understood in an abstract way; rather it has everything to do with getting involved with very concrete people in well-defined circumstances. Concretely, this means that the basis for a compassionate ethics of hospitality lies in a careful responsibility for other. In our tendency to 'pass by', we are appealed to 'hospitality' to restrain ourselves and to direct ourselves to the other.

The great solicitude and attention to the vulnerable other implies also the challenge to develop 'an ethics of compassionate hospitality' for people who in their concrete at times difficult social context and life situation, develop a behavior that does not comply with the Christian ethical ideas and norms as expounded by the Church. Such an ethics of compassionate hospitality must make itself concrete in and through an 'ethics of growth'.⁴⁴ Such an 'accompanying' ethics – one that is involved with the people – is faced with the challenge to further develop the idea of John Paul II on the 'law of styles of life that give it expression in the most qualitative manner possible. 'Gradualness' without at the same time degrading itself into the 'gradualness of the law', meaning to say without taking anything away from the radical character of the Christian *agape* and the forms and Individual person, irreducible to one or other totality, has a divine unconditional unassailable value... Insofar as this value is also affected by a miserable nakedness and vulnerability, it likewise implies an appeal, a categorical imperative – to put it along with Kant – 'not to kill'.but also along life's way, for instance when people become victims of legal violence and oppression.⁴⁵ This means that this ethics of responsibility begins as an act of hospitality,⁴⁶ a withdrawal – an ethical *kenosis* or *anachoresis*

43 Id., *Proximity with the Other*, *Op. cit.*, p.70

44 Id., "Meaningful living and acting: An ethical and Educational-Pastoral Model in Christian Perspective" in *Louvain studies*, 13(1988) spring, n.1 pp 3-26. and no.2 pp.137-160.

45 Id., "A Christian Inter-Human Ethics with Two Pillars: Mercy and Justice" in *Asian Horizons: Dharmaram Journal of Theology*, Vol.4, no.1, June 2010, pp.158-159

46 W. Scheikaer, *Responsibility and Christian Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1999, (3rd ed. pp. 213-227.

– in order to create space for the other as other, in his uniqueness.⁴⁷ “With Levinas, we would like to formulate a radical criterion to discover the quality of ethical care, namely “the order not to let the other alone, be it in the face of the inexorable” or “You shall not let anyone die alone!”⁴⁸

IX. Beyond ‘Cross-free’ Compassion and Hospitality: Passion for Justice

With this, however, not everything has been said about Christian ethic of compassionate hospitality. Indeed, there is a risk in the emphasis on compassion with all its project of hospitality for the materially, socially, ethically and spiritually poor and suffering other. Not because something would be wrong with this, but rather because easily a certain one-sidedness can be ushered along with it, which can undermine the passion of compassion itself or reduce it to ‘good works’ and cheap altruism, without much being done structurally to the situations that cause suffering and calamity.

A ‘sensitive’ ethics could run the risk of forgetting the fact that the ‘suffering’ of the other could be the result of the moral evil of fellow-humans as well as of the structures. In the Good Samaritan parable all attention is paid to the confrontation with the suffering other, to the appeal that ensues from his epiphany to the three passers-by (the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan) and to the compassion and hospitality shown by the Samaritan. But we should not forget to note that the starting point of the story lies in the wounded man who was the victim of a crime committed by others who have attacked him, robbed him, hit him half-dead and abandoned him. We should certainly reflect on how victims of crime should be received and cared for, but it is of equal importance to reflect on the cause and circumstances wherein people become victims of the immoral acts of others, so that something can be done about them and a way can be sought to prevent others in

47 Roger Burggraeve, “A Christian Inter-Human Ethics...” *Art. cit.* p.158

48 E. Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversation with Philippe Nemo*, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985, pp118-119.

the future from becoming victims. This is why it is extremely important or rather utterly necessary, for an ethics of compassionate hospitality, to link the compassionate responsibility for the other with the 'visceral' resistance against the evil that people inflict on each other, whereby people precisely end up in 'need' and then require care and mercy.⁴⁹

With this, we discover an important, often mistrusted dimension of ethical passion, namely the passion of anger that enrages itself over inflicted evil and injustice, and that not only exposes this injustice as intolerable but also – in a driven manner – strives to undo it. Here comes the importance of 'militant compassion' or 'moral indignation' concerning factual situations, realizations, strategic operations, structures in a given historical, socio-economic, cultural, political and religious context.⁵⁰ Dorothy Soelle rightly qualifies this as the great 'anger in the belly': "This cannot go on further. This is unheard of! This cries out to heaven!" We have to link with the ethics of compassionate hospitality, militant compassion or passionate anger for Justice. "This is often forgotten. God is not only a 'good' God but also 'angry God'.compassionate ethics can derail into one-sidedness. The God who chooses the side of the vulnerable, excluded or alienated person is at the same time a God who is enraged about evil. ... 'holy anger' of God: Bible teaches, in other words, how the unconditional – and thus holy – love of God likewise implies a holy anger: not a vice but a virtue, a noble passion!"⁵¹

X. Living the Hospitality of God

The Gospel stories not only show how serious our obligation is to welcome the stranger in our home, but tell us that guests are carrying precious gifts with them which they are eager to reveal to a receptive host. Hospitality is the work of God, who initiates and completes in us communion through Christ, who did not 'exploit' his status as God's

49 Roger Burggraeve "A Christian Ethics... *Art. cit.*., pp.160-161

50 E. Schillebeeckx. "Magisterium and the World of Politics", in *Concilium*, 36 (1968), pp. 28-36.

51 Roger Burggraeve, "A Christian Inter-Human Ethics" *Art. cit.*, p.162

son as a possession, (Phil 2:5-6) but emptied himself in a ministry of compassion and radical hospitality to the stranger.⁵²

Poverty of mind makes us good hosts. When we are filled with ideas, concepts, opinions and convictions we cannot be a good host. A good host not only has to be poor in mind but also poor in heart. When our heart is filled with prejudices, worries, jealousies, there is little room for a stranger. Thus hospitality requires the poverty of mind and the poverty of heart. This might help us to understand the importance of 'training' for hospitality; a process of self-emptying and training for service (Phil 2: 6-8) to reach out to others. Hospitality as creating space, receptivity, poverty of mind and heart to help, to serve, to care, to heal, to reach out toward our neighbors would make us perceive that life is a gift not to possess but to share.⁵³

Hospitality, leads us to welcome 'the other', the different, the stranger; it is even considered as one of the great ethical categories of our time, as a structural and architectonic element of human living together. It attempts and continues to attempt to be a space of welcome of the other. It renounces – at least consciously – the fundamentalist and closed attitudes. It wants to build 'houses and schools of communion', a space where the dialogue of civilizations could be possible. It tries to create spaces where the different generations, cultures and races live and grow together. The hospitality towards the other makes us more compassionate, less institutional and more liminal.

Without hospitality, our communities and persons will remain closed in ourselves, in our own culture, and we will miss possibilities of interacting with the whole. The opposite of 'hospitality' is 'hostility', rejection of the different, violence. There is today in our world cultural violence, clash of civilizations, horrible confrontations which are born from the exclusion and rejection of the 'different'. The exclusion is becoming the primordial sin of the processes of globalization.

52 Lucien Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God*, Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2000, pp.52. 57

53 Henry J M Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, New York: Doubleday, 1975, pp. 102-109.

Hospitality is the outworking of our faith in God as the Father of all, none excluded; that we all belong together; and that we need to accept and rejoice in each other, irrespective of our differences. In the compassionate ethics of hospitality three significant components come into play: 1. Encounter with the other: The more we get to know others, the more we fight on their behalf. When faced with the cries of the other, the hospitable self responds with social justice; we never feel as autonomous individuals, unaffected by the needs of others. When we open our homes and lives to others in need of shelter, food and friendship, we encounter Christ who opened and shared himself for our greatest need. 2. Creating space for others can generate real complications. Eventually, creating hospitable space in our lives, homes and Nations through open frontier one must consider the hospitable nature of God who works our communion, not through lack or scarcity but through abundance of His generous hospitality through His self kenosis. This is always a great challenge for Christian ethics.⁵⁴ 3. Witnessing to God's compassion as hospitality would demand sharing of resources and opening up a world of vulnerabilities even at the expense of our security for the vulnerable and down-trodden guests.

XI. Conclusion

In the face of the other, one is always provoked to respond in hospitality. "Hospitality is the ethical praxis of God's justice".⁵⁵ Ultimately, it is God's self-emptying, unconditional and compassionate hospitality that summons us to break through all boundaries by religion, caste and nationality to offer generous and compassionate hospitality for the down-trodden and suffering. We recall Jesus' words: what you do to the least of my brothers and sisters you do to me. It is often tempting to relegate the practices of our faith to the dark corners of our interior life. Faith in God as the Father of all, does not differentiate between fiend and foe, 'so that you may be children of the Father'

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- 54 Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, Grand Rapids, Minnesota: Eerdmanns Publishing co. 199, pp 128-129, 219.
- 55 Carol J. Dempsey, *Justice: A Biblical perspective*, St Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2008, p. "

(Mt 5:45-46). "Hospitality to the stranger is our way to God and God's way to us..."⁵⁶ The *metanoia* demanded of the Kingdom-communion takes concrete form in compassionate hospitality, a hospitality that welcomes all life, works to sustain it and free it from all exploitative oppression and for violence.⁵⁷ Challenged by God's self-emptying, unlimited and compassionate hospitality, we are to construct an ethics of compassionate hospitality that would strip us of all our securities and would open us up to the other in an extravagant and generous hospitality radically 'stretched out' and 'exaggerated', for building a 'fraternity', a community of God's Kingdom.

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56 Lucien Richard, *Op. cit.*, p.52

57 Carol J. Dempsey, *Op. cit.*, p.40

Serving at the Table of God: Hospitable Church

Samuel Rayan*

One of the most important calls that Christ gives His church is to be welcoming to people. It is a duty that can never be compromised. One of the theological justifications for the existence of the church in the world is hospitality—being open to all, including the strangers and aliens. An inhospitable church cannot truly represent or effectively preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Samuel Rayan, internationally renowned Jesuit theologian, argues in this essay that hospitality belongs to the true nature of the church. He explores the *ad intra* and *ad extra* domains where the church has to be hospitable. He also mentions the areas where she has unfortunately failed in realizing Christ-like hospitality.

Virtues of Christians are ought to be the virtues of the Church also. Hospitality is one of the virtues that the Church must necessarily possess. For, hospitality belongs to the heart of Jesus Christ whose mystical body is the Church in the world. Only a hospitable Church can fulfil its missions in the world adequately.

* This essay represents the result of a recent conversation with Samuel Rayan by Jose Chittadiyil and Joseph Elanjimattom.

God of Hospitality

Reflections on a hospitable Church cannot but begin with the God of hospitality. God is a great host and the whole creation is his guest. God manifests his hospitability to the universe as a *generous* host. It is out of His love that the universe and everything in it came into existence. The whole human race and the rest of the creation have been loved into existence and called to share in some manner or other in God's own perfection, God's own life, wisdom and beauty. It is not because any creature has any claim to existence; but only out of his generosity and love that he has invited us all into the sphere of his own being. The human group especially participates in God's perfection with the ability to make decisions, to distinguish between truth and untruth, to reason and arrive at conclusions, and to make new things. No creature, not even humans have any right to this but are entertained by God acting as a host. In that sense creation is an act of divine hospitality and the whole creation is a guest before God.

God invites us to participate in his own personal life by giving us his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who inspires us and guides us to discernment in matter of truth and error. The rest of the creation is also invited to participate in God's beauty and power. The singings of birds, the beauty of flowers, the creativity of ants etc. are some examples. All these form part of God's sharing his being with the world. The human person is invited in a special way with reasoning capacity, ability to invent new things, and to discern between good and evil. Thus human beings enjoy God's hospitality all through human history.

The growth and development of creatures too are a matter of God's hospitality. God feeds everything. Jesus himself has told us that God's providence clothes and feeds all creatures on earth (cf. Mt 6: 26). The beauty of every being - its shape, colour, fragrance- is God's gift out of his magnanimity.

Jesus: The Personification of God's Hospitality

The supreme hospitality of God consists in giving his son Jesus Christ for mankind. God loved the world so much that he sends his only son for our salvation (cf. Jn 3:16). Jesus too shares his knowledge, his truth, his gospel, his healing power with us. We read in the scriptures

several instances where Jesus feeds the hungry crowds. At one instance He feeds five thousand and at another four thousand. He asks his disciples to feed the people too. There are other minor incidents like asking the parents to feed the raised girl at Jairus's house.

The healing ministry of Jesus is in congruence with his nature of being hospitable. Jesus shows his hospitality also by instructing people to have a meaningful life. There are two basic commandments that Jesus gave his followers – “*Love God with all your heart and Love your neighbour as you love yourself*” (Mt 22:37). These are the basic commandments of hospitality. If you love others you serve them and also share with them whatever you have.

At the last supper Jesus is the host: He is inviting the participants to take and eat what he offers. He transforms the offered bread and wine into his body and blood. This is the greatest form of hospitality. It is not actually a sacrifice. In the whole account of the last supper there is no mention of a sacrifice offered. But it is a meal, a shared meal. ‘Come, take and eat’ is the invitation. He offers his own self as food and drink to his guests.

Then He sends His disciples to proclaim to all nations the Gospel that God loves them and that they should love one another and God. Sharing a truth, a message, a hope is truly an act of hospitality that is capable of transforming people's life. Thus sending of the apostles to all the nations of the earth too is an act of hospitality on Jesus' part.

Then the final offer of eternal life or the life with God is another great act of hospitality. It is taking part in His eternal bliss. All are invited freely, provided they are open and willing to receive and fulfil the condition of love towards God and one another.

Church as the Continuation of Christ's Hospitality

Jesus instituted the church to preach his message of love. Thus preaching the gospel is the sharing of a wonderful gift that we received from God through Christ. It is an act of hospitality. The preaching of the gospel, the commandment to love each other, love for the poor and so on are the ways by which church executes the mission entrusted to her by Jesus.

When the rich man approaches Jesus and asks Him what he should do to inherit eternal life, Jesus replies telling him to go and sell all his possessions and distribute the income to the poor. The early church took this idea very seriously and in Acts Chs. 2 and 4 we have the account of the early Christians selling their property, and bringing the money to the apostles in order to be distributed among the poor and the needy. This has been called the 'early Christian socialism' or the 'early Christian communism.' This is a great act of being hospitable to the needy and the poor so that all may become one great family.

In the middle of the 19th century this account by Luke about the early Christian socialism was questioned by a number of European scholars. According to them, Luke was not really giving an account of what happened in the early Christian community; the narration could only be an imaginary account of an ideal situation. When this criticism found many takers, a group of scholars from Louvain University decided to look into the matter and from 1960 to 1968 they conducted a research on this matter. At the end they published a book in 1968, titled '*The Community called the Church*'.

What they concluded was that the depiction in the Acts of the Apostles was not simply an imagination of Luke but something that really happened. In fact till the end of the seventh century, that is, until the fall of the Roman Empire, almost every Christian community in West Asia, Southern Europe and Northern Africa practised this socialism. This is the most beautiful account of the hospitality of the church. The hospitality of the church was to make sure that the basic needs of all members were met properly. To say that the church is hospitable means all are hospitable to each other in that community.

Hospitality and the Mission of the Church

The mission entrusted to Jesus' disciples is also an invitation to share the good news and the divine Spirit that God has offered for the whole world. So mission is not compelling somebody to receive the faith we profess but it is an invitation to share in the divine life that we have received from Christ. Conversion, which is also one of the most controversial issues connected to Christianity, is not to be understood as an act of passing from one faith to another but an enlightening of the self, a conversion from selfishness, lies, etc.

In the concluding paragraph of *Matthew 25* - the last judgement - Jesus says: "I was hungry and you gave me food; I was naked you clothed me; I was homeless you received me. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To the question as to when have we not done so, Jesus answers "whenever you have not done these to the least of my brothers you have not done it for me". It means that any man or woman at any time of history who did such a service to the least of His brothers or sisters has done it to Him. Jesus is identifying himself with the needy, the weak and the poor of the whole world. And this is the type of mission that He encourages everyone to do, thus showing hospitality to God. By this we become heirs to the Kingdom of God and partakers in His salvation. So it is not conversion from one religion to another; rather the enlightenment of self to acknowledge the other as God's own image and likeness is what is necessary for salvation.

At one period of time, there prevailed an idea in the church that 'there can be no salvation outside the Roman Catholic Church'. This was indeed a very naive view held by the church. We must understand that there was no Roman Catholic Church before Christ. What about the people before Christ including Abraham and Moses? Will they not be saved? Popes of the middle ages said that it was necessary for salvation that every human being be subjected to the Roman Pontiff. The idea that the common folk of China, Japan, Indonesia, etc. who never heard about a place called Rome or a Pontiff who resides in Rome will not be saved was absolutely the result of a false view point of ecclesiology. The Second Vatican Council tells that such a view is wrong. The Council teaches that salvation is available even to those who under the grace follow their conscience even if they have never come to an explicit knowledge of God (LG 6). They follow their conscience because they have the divine grace inherent within them, no matter whether they acknowledge it or not. This affirmation of the Vatican council is in stark contrast to what the church held for centuries.

If giving alms to the poor attracts someone to the church, it can never be the fault of the church. The social and administrative setup in those places is to be blamed for such miserable conditions of the people. Such a situation might have prompted missionaries to distribute food

grains and other provisions to the starving, often without the slightest motive of converting people to their faith. In most of such cases, the minority feudal lords own the majority of the cultivatable land and make the ordinary people their slave workers. We can never preach the Gospel to a starving group of people unless we feed them first. So we feed them first and then preach. The alms that the church gives is purely out of charity towards a suffering brother or sister and nobody has any right to criticise such acts. Nobody would dare say that it was 'conversion' that motivated Mother Teresa to do all the charity that she did. She did all these for the destitute and suffering as her duty to Christ. Sometimes all these can become a motivation for others to embrace Christianity. It is a case of responding positively and accepting the invitation from Christ himself and consequently embracing faith.

Once there was the erroneous conception that the greater the number of converts the greater the success of one's missionary endeavour. It was indeed a human error. A missionary is to proclaim the good news and at the same time is expected to respect the culture and tradition of the people where he preaches. In that sense, inculturation can be seen as an act of respecting an indigenous culture, giving them the true faith in a language and form that is sensible and intelligible to them. Many exemplary inculturation attempts have been made by missionaries in India.

Hospitability between different Rites

While taking into consideration various aspects of the hospitability of the church, the attitude of the Catholic church towards its counterparts at various levels is to be analysed.

All the *Rites* in the church must be friendly towards each other. Sadly enough, there is a sectarian mentality seen among rites within the same Catholic faith. In Kerala there are three rites all of which are imported rites having foreign origins and names. Possibly, had a single rite based on the Indian tradition arisen, such a sectarian mentality would not have developed here.

Since we do not have a Latin culture in our country there cannot be a Latin rite in India. There can only be an Indian rite. There is *Slav* rite in Czechoslovakia. It is the common faith of the church expressed in

Slav culture and *Slav* language. When it was developed in the seventh century the German bishops opposed it but the Roman hierarchy supported the individuality of that rite and blessed it. A rite is not for exportation or importation as what happened in the cases of Indian church. So inculturation is a basic element in the life of the church. The different rites in India need to be more hospitable, and cooperative with each other in each other's missionary and charitable activities.

Catholic attitude towards Non-Catholic Christians

Catholic Church is not yet fully hospitable towards other Christian denominations. Various churches in the world have formed the World Council of Churches of which the Catholic Church is not a member with its age old stand point that Catholic Church is not a church but 'The Church'. Nevertheless we are members in various commissions of the WCC. The modern era of secularization demands the churches to go hand in hand for fulfilling the divine mission of Christ. And it is for the Catholic Church to lead that endeavour. So the Catholic Church has to accept other churches as having an equal mission. Also, we must not forget that most of the churches arose as a result of conflict with the Roman church, less due to non-agreements in matters of faith. But, of late, there is a greater openness seen in the churches to hear one another and to work together in areas and matters agreeable to all.

Hospitality towards Other Religions

The Catholic Church had maintained a less tolerant attitude towards other religious beliefs mainly because of its mistaken understanding of the message of the Gospel. Jesus has never condemned other religions. In John 4 Jesus approaches a Samaritan woman for water and some discussion takes place between them. She asks Jesus a religious question regarding worship: Where should the worship be, at Jerusalem or at their Mount Gerizim? Jesus replies saying, "the real worship is in spirit and truth". After this she leaves Him as His first apostle- *Prima Apostolorum*- (St. Augustine) to her village to spread His message. The Jews had a loathing towards the Samaritans for religious reasons. But Jesus did not show any such discrimination to them. Likewise the church too must not show any discrimination to other religions and must have a hospitable attitude towards them.

Whatever be the name by which God is known, be it Brahma, Shiva or Christ it is the ultimate aim of life that matters. Whether you aim at salvation or *moksha*, living the ultimate values and principles must become the criteria of a worthy life. As far as the relationship with the other religions is concerned, the church has already accepted the fact of their having rays of truth in them. Still the Vatican is not so favourable in including the sacred sayings of other religions in the Liturgy and so on. We still hesitate to do so because we do not consider non-Christians, in the real sense, as Disciples of Christ. An acceptable position at present could be, though we may not be able to include their prayers into the liturgy or to include their sages in the list of our saints we could still honour and respect them.

Attitude towards Political Parties

The attitude of the church towards political parties is also to be considered when we speak about the hospitability of the church. Political parties have their own agenda and have their own political game plans to grab power. The church must prudently discern their motives and find out the areas where she could cooperate with them for the welfare of the people of God. The dialectics between the church and political parties arises where the parties keep an atheist attitude and act against moral ideals. In such a situation the church can never adopt the role of a passive onlooker. Here the church is not expected to be hospitable or cooperative with them but boldly speak against and oppose them with all the means at its disposal. Such a situation is existent in the present social milieu of Kerala.

Non-hospitable Attitudes of the Church

There were a number of examples from the part of the church which were anti-Christian and non-hospitable in nature such as forceful imposition of Christian faith during the colonial period, inquisition, crusades, slave trade, etc. They cannot be justified. All those were political decisions and not drawn from the Gospel message. There are also certain other non-hospitable attitudes still prevailing in the Church. Some of them are mentioned below.

Attitude towards Movements of People

Several movements of people have sprouted after the Second World War around the world to safeguard their freedom, land, water and

habitat from the colonials or corporate powers. The Church had been showing a supportive or a passive indifferent attitude towards them in most cases. In Latin America when there arose a praxis oriented approach to doing theology, called liberation theology, the official church, at first, vehemently opposed it. In 1984 a document was published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith against the liberation trend. Then after the meeting of Brazilian Bishops with Pope John Paul II the same Congregation published another document in 1986 practically supporting liberation theology, withdrawing the earlier one. There are several people movements in various parts of the world fighting against unjust governments and corporates. Sadly enough, the church is not involving itself in many of them as it ought to.

Non-hospitable attitude towards Women's movement

Women's movement receives little hospitable attitude from the Catholic Church. Women's demand to have participation in ministerial priesthood has been flatly denied by the church. Pope John Paul II once commented that "Christ has excluded women from priesthood, so the church has no authority to ordain them." But actually speaking, apart from the male dominated tradition of the church there is no scriptural or theological point in denying sacred Orders for women.

In the resurrection scene Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb early in the morning to anoint the body of Jesus. She discovers that his body was not there and starts weeping. She then finds Jesus near her asking why she was weeping. She recognises Him and was then sent to Peter to give witness to the resurrection event. It was a mission and apostolate. St. Augustine calls her the Apostle to the apostles - *Apostola Apostolorum*. The news which she brought was the key mystery of Christianity itself. Thus it is evident that Jesus did not have any discrimination towards women.

Being More Hospitable in the Modern World

By practising the gospel as much as possible the church must utilize all its resources to make the kingdom of God a reality on earth. It can be achieved by abolishing all discriminations, discouraging arms race and wars, working for a better distribution of wealth, etc. Being alive and open to God's presence whether it is in the church or outside the

church is what the church must do in order to be more hospitable. There can be God's activity among Catholics, Non-Catholics, Non-Christians, and even among atheists. The church must be open to such intervention of God in human history. This is to safeguard the dignity of human beings and to maintain peace in the world. The urgent need of today is that church must work for a more egalitarian distribution of wealth so that those who starve and are deprived of basic needs may have a better living.

There must be a more gospel-based economic agenda in the parishes and dioceses which is oriented towards improving the living standards of the abandoned and the downtrodden. Our catechism and Christian training of the community must lead to creating awareness in the minds of people that they must share better with their needy brethren in Christ. The sharing of God's blessing is the mission entrusted to the church by Christ. This mission includes sharing of faith as well as wealth so that all in the community can recite together *Our Father* meaningfully. Even a redistribution of resources need to be seriously thought about.

Conclusion

The church at present is hospitable through its various activities and institutions whether initiated by lay people, religious brothers, sisters or priests. The church is doing a great service to humankind through its charitable activities and moral teachings. Not all applicants may get admission in a church-run educational institution due to restrictions of different kinds. We may not always be able to consider the poor for courses demanding much investment, yet we try our best to provide them with all educational facilities at the elementary level. The church is hospitable to the marginalized sections of the society and she shows great compassion and concern to them. The Church helps them to improve their living conditions while in the case of homosexuals, lesbians etc. she repeatedly asks them to correct their lives since it is a behaviour not becoming for human beings. The church thus invites them to be more human.

A community will become human only by sharing. The church's role in the modern world is to promote, support and motivate this sharing

programme starting from the parish level. The world is just like a dining table laid by God for the whole human family. He has prepared different delicious dishes for humankind. No one of the invitees how strong or powerful he/she is, is supposed to take away anything more than what he/she actually needs. Unfortunately that is not the case in the present world where people unscrupulously grab even what belongs to future generations to satisfy their greed. Such immoralities are to be prevented that all may enjoy the hospitality of God peacefully. So the church is a servant at the table of God.

Sameeksha

Kalady

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Migration and Hospitality

Jose Kalluvelil

Flow of people from one part of the world to the other offers big possibilities and poses huge risks. Every nation is very conscious of its border security. Each country tries to ward off not only enemies but also all asylum seekers. Many people are killed every year around the globe in their illegal attempts to cross international borders. This scenario raises an important question, namely, is there at least a scope for what we can call international hospitality? In this essay, the author who is a specialist in migration studies, offers some preliminary reflections linking migration with hospitality.

Introduction

Modern world is marked by the phenomenon of intense human mobility. People move from place to place due to various reasons. In many regions of the world today people live in tragic situations of instability and insecurity. It does not come as a surprise that in such contexts the poor and the destitute make plans to escape, seek a new land that can offer them bread, peace and dignity. This is the migration of the desperate: men and women, often young, who have no alternative than to leave their own country to venture into the unknown. Thus the desire and hope for better living conditions make thousands of people to move from place to place.

How to hospitably welcome migrants and refugees presents urgent questions for social and political thought. Current debates can be

attributed to three discursive fields. Liberal versions hold that there are good reasons for political and legal limits to hospitality. Critical perspectives advocate a renewed cosmopolitanism. Finally, deconstructive perspectives focus on the demand of unconditional hospitality as an absolute ethical requirement.¹ This article, although engages with the tensions and limits inherent in current notions of hospitality, advocates unconditional hospitality as an absolute ethical requirement.

The Term Migrant

The term “migrant” is used first of all to refer to refugees and exiles in search of freedom and security outside the confines of their own country. However, it also refers to young people who study abroad and all those who leave their own country to look for better conditions of life elsewhere.² The migration phenomenon is in continuous expansion, and this poses questions and challenges to the pastoral action of the Church. The II Vatican Council, in its Decree *Christus Dominus*, calls for a “special concern.... for those among the faithful who, on account of their own way or condition of life, cannot sufficiently make use of the common and ordinary pastoral service of parish priests or totally deprived of it. Among them are very many migrants, exiles and refugees.”

Migration Demography

The principal categories of present day people on the move may be listed, even if not exhaustively, as follows:

1. *Emigrants*, in the usual sense of the word, who have left their habitual abode in order to look for a new life and the means to live it abroad.³ For the most part, there are also industrial technicians, exiles,

1 HEIDRUN FRIESE, “The Limits of Hospitality: Political Philosophy, Undocumented Migration and the Local Arena”, in: *European Journal of Social Theory*, Aug. 2010, Vol. 113, No.3, 325.

2 Cf. *Ibid.*

3 Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius XII *Exul Familia* AAS 44 (1952); Motu Proprio of Pope Paul VI *Pastoralis migratorum cura*, AAS 61 (1969) pp. 601-603; Instruction of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, *De pastoralis migratorum cura*, AAS 61 (1969) pp. 614-643.

and refugees in search of freedom. To them may be added those young students who go abroad to improve their technical skills or cultural understanding.⁴

2. *Sailors*, who go to sea either as members of merchant navy or as fishermen, and are habitually separated from the family circle and the country of their birth.⁵

3. *Travellers by air*, whose profession takes them rapidly across the skies to the furthest points of the globe. Included in these are passengers and airport personnel.⁶

4. *Nomadic peoples*, whose life consist of wandering. They are nearly always strangers to society, which only with difficulty understands their ethnic and cultural identity.⁷

5. *Tourists*, who come into contact with new surroundings and societies for reasons of pleasure, health, cultural enrichment or religious pilgrimage.⁸ One could add all those who make continual use of highways.

The current migration flows have placed the issue of migration high on the international agenda. The magnitude and complexity of the phenomenon is such that international migration can no longer be considered peripheral to the mainstream of development policies. Today, every country is affected in some way by migration – either as country of origin, transit or destination, or sometimes a combination of these.

The increase and development of these phenomena, against the background of the world in the process of transformation, create needs and pose questions to which human and pastoral wisdom needs to give suitable answers, especially in view of hospitality.

4 Pope Paul VI, *Populorum progressio* 68, (AAS 50).

5 Apostolic Constitution *Exul Familia* passim; *Leges Operis Apostolatus Maris*, AA 50 (1958).

6 Apostolic Constitution *Exul Familia*, AAS 44 (1952).

7 Apostolic Constitution of Pope Paul VI *Regimini Ecclesiae universae*, n. 52.

8 Directory for the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, *Peregrinans in Terra*, AAS 61 (1969).

Millions of migrants living outside their country of birth are international migrants of one type or another – whether living abroad voluntarily or forced by circumstances beyond their control; whether seeking a better life or simply a different one; whether legally admitted to residence or living a clandestine existence on the margins of society. And all – irrespective of their national origin, their race, creed or color, or their legal status – share with the nationals of their host community both a common humanity and rights and responsibilities including the right to expect decent and humane treatment. While for many the migration process is an empowering experience, the reality for some is one of exploitation and abuse. Having seen the meaning and kinds of the phenomenon of migration, let us now analyze the effect of migration on questions of development.

Immigration: Resource or Obstacle for Development?

As we have seen before, in the modern world, where there are grave inequalities between the rich and the poor countries, the immigration of people looking for a better life is on the increase. These people come from less privileged areas of the earth to the developed countries. They are often perceived as threat to economic growth and high levels of well-being. But when we analyze the situation objectively, it becomes clear that the immigrants fill a labor need which would otherwise remain unfilled where the local work force is insufficient or unwilling to engage themselves in their works.⁹ Hence immigration can be perceived as resource for development rather than an obstacle to it.

Moreover, the migrants are at the same time a cause and an effect of the technical and scientific era which produce the ‘new Age’.¹⁰ The problem of “brain drain” or migration of the talent and skills emphasizes the same aspect. One of the problems that has been

9 PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome, 2005, No. 297.

10 PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLES, “Letter to Episcopal Conferences,” in *Church and People on the Move*, Vatican City, 1978, p. 9.

considerably debated in recent years is that the so-called "Third World" countries have lost much of their educated and highly skilled human power through migration to the rich, industrialized countries of Western Europe, USA, Canada and Australia.¹¹

Ethical Issues which Call for Hospitality

In the complex phenomenon of migration, numerous human and ethical issues are involved. They are as follows: the tendency to foster the political and juridical unity of the human family, increase in cultural exchanges, interdependence among States, the liberalization of trades, the multiplication of multinational enterprises, and the imbalance between the rich and poor countries and so on.¹²

The interplay of such factors produces the movement of masses from one area of the globe to another. The vastness and complexity of the phenomenon call for a profound analysis of the structural changes that have taken place, namely the globalization of economics and social life. The convergence of races, civilizations and cultures within one and the same juridical and social order, poses an urgent problem of cohabitation based on hospitality. Frontiers tend to disappear, distances are shortened, and the repercussion of events is felt up to the farthest areas.

Migration always implies an uprooting from the original environment, often translated into an experience of solitude accompanied by the risk of fading into anonymity. This situation may lead people to a rejection of the new environment, but also to accepting it uncritically, in contrast to preceding experience. At times there could even be a willingness to undergo a passive modernization, which could easily be the source of cultural and social alienation. That is to say, human mobility means numerous possibilities to be open, to meet, and to assemble. However, we cannot ignore the fact that it also brings about manifestations of individual and collective rejection.

11 T.K. Oommen, *India*, Govt. of India, Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi, 1985, p. 124.

12 JOHN PAUL II, *Message of the Holy Father for the 87th World Day of Migration* 2001, No. 2.

Role of National and International Agencies

The National and International agencies need to take these serious problems constantly into consideration. The comprehension of the human being should induce them to proclaim the fundamental human rights and to speak out when they are trampled upon. Therefore "institutions in host countries must keep careful watch to prevent the spread of the temptation to exploit foreign labors, denying them the same rights enjoyed by nationals, rights that are to be guaranteed to all without discrimination."¹³

People coming from less privileged areas of the earth to the developed countries are often perceived as a threat to the well-being achieved in the host countries thanks to decades of economic growth. Hence the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace urges: "Given the quickly developing global dimensions of economic-financial relationships and of the labor market, there is a need to promote an effective international cooperation among States by means of treaties, agreements and common plans of action"¹⁴ to safeguard the fundamental rights of human mobility and to ensure hospitality. The concerned agencies should not grow tired of affirming and defending the dignity of the human person, highlighting the inalienable rights that originate from it. These rights are concretely employed in the concept of universal common good, which includes the whole family of peoples, beyond every nationalistic egoism.

A Welcoming Church

"The Church journeys along the roads of history together with all of humanity."¹⁵ As far as the people on the move are considered, there is a departure Church and an arrival Church. But a territorial entity cannot consider itself as an independent unit. The same local Church is simultaneously a departure Church and arrival Church. While

13 PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome, 2005, No. 298.

14 *Ibid.* No. 292.

15 *Ibid.* No. 18.

it is affected by the emigration for different reasons of members of its own faithful, at the same time it is affected by immigration of some other people due to some other reasons. Pope Paul VI reminds in this context: "A warm welcome is the expression of the Church's charitableness understood in its profundity and universality."¹⁶

In his Message to the European Conference on the pastoral care of migrants in 1973, Pope Paul VI insisted that the pastoral care required by people on the move is necessarily a pastoral care without frontiers. This can be realized only through collaboration and solidarity between the Churches concerned. Hence the Church ought to introduce adequate forms of pastoral action. It is necessary to have a stable, personalized and communitarian care of migrants in view of proper hospitality.

Conclusion

A text from the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* would help us conclude reflections on migration and hospitality: "The Church, the sign in history of God's love for mankind and of the vocation of the whole human race to unity as children of the one Father, intends with this document on her social doctrine to propose to all men and women a humanism that is up to the standards of God's plan of love in history, an integral and solidary humanism capable of creating a new social, economic and political order, founded on the dignity and freedom of every human person, to be brought about in peace, justice and solidarity."¹⁷

In most cultures, the right to hospitality is a sacred right. The stranger is perceived not as an enemy but as human being in need of help who is deprived of the protection of his family or clan. The sacredness of this right can go so far as to regard the guest as a messenger of God. Hence it is an honor for the host to receive him. But what is remarkable about a migrant is that s/he is not a guest of a few days. S/he may settle down in one's own place using the available and limited resources. This chance makes hospitality towards the

16 Paul VI, Encyclical, *Populorum progressio*, no. 69.

17 PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church*, n. 19.

migrants a burdening obligation, unlike being nice to tourists. Therefore, hospitality to the migrants cannot but lead us to such themes of the social teachings of the church as common destination of the created goods. It seems that the church and the international community are yet to look into the intricacies of this human issue.

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Hospitality and Tourism

Cyril Desbruslais

Tourism represents the commercial version of hospitality. The Indian Hospitality Industry is growing at the phenomenal rate of almost 9% per year – the second fastest for the Industry in the whole world. It implies many things for the country, people, culture, and of course, economy. Above all, tourism seems to alter the meaning of hospitality. Attention to tourism raises also questions of justice. Cyril Desbruslais in this essay explores various dimensions of tourism from the perspective of hospitality. The author was professor of Philosophy at JDV Pune from 1978 to 2005.

“Travelling is almost like talking with men of other centuries.” (Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method*)

Introduction

The greatest migration in the history of mankind takes place every year. We call it tourism. Commercial jet travel has now fallen within the paychecks of India's burgeoning middle class (more than the total population of several Western nations put together) and Indians now swell the ranks of today's globe-trotters.

This is a unique service industry: one where the consumer is taken to the product and not the other way round, as is usually the case. This, of course, puts the product at the mercy of visitors who can smother it and jeopardize its very survival.

Tourism is a stimulus for change, both positive and negative and when tourists are insensitive to local cultures and traditions, this can touch off an explosive situation. Tourism is also, for various other reasons, a highly risk-prone activity. The tourism scene can alter at a moment's notice, due to real or imagined fears. The rumblings of a volcano can result in the grounding of flights and the stranding of thousands of tourists who need to be fed and housed (an unforeseeable expense for some hapless airlines).

Tourism also presupposes a wide variety of favourable conditions for it to "work"! Among these are a certain cultural diversity (who wants to visit a place where everything is the same as it is at home?), economic stability (there can be no tourism in time of war; terrorist-prone areas are ignored save by the most foolhardy adventure tourist), and personal safety (rumours about the untrustworthiness of a company's transport facilities could lead to drastic drop-outs which would threaten its very viability).

Finally, tourism calls for a whole gamut of allied business ventures, very disparate in nature – from travel agents to tour guides, from restaurants to hotels, from insurance to transport and many others...

Hospitality, that much touted virtue of the East, the natural art of a host making a guest feel "at home", the spontaneous provision of care and kindness whenever needed, has now morphed into big business. Tourism is a profit-making commercial venture of promise that beckons eager young graduates fresh from business school, to add further fuel to the fires of cut-throat competition and slurps up lakhs that could have well been used to furnish the 'little ones' of the slums and the village with basic needs that have been roundly denied them since Independence.

Indeed, tourism is India's largest service industry, supplying some 8% of our total employment and raking in a good 6% of our GDP. Over five million foreign, and approximately 560 million domestic, tourists traverse the length and breadth of our land each year, bringing in the colossal equivalent of 100 billion US dollars per annum and – at the current annual increase of 9.5% - that should reach an all-time high of twice the amount by as early as 2014!

The Tourism Department of the Government of India has launched a highly successful 'Incredible India' Campaign and now the World

Travel and Tourism Council (sponsored by the World Economic Forum) ranks our country as the fourteenth best tourist destination worldwide, due to our many World Heritage Sites (natural and cultural), our rich flora and variegated fauna and our many creative industries (both large- and small-scale). We are also rated as the eleventh most popular tourist spot in the Asia-Pacific Region (but 62nd in the world, though we did move up three places, last year!). If we are sixth in the world as regards price competitiveness, we lag far behind as 38th in matters of safety and security. Of course, we can't be blamed for the recent spate of terrorist bombings and hi-jackings, but let us not forget that terrorist attacks in India assumed an alarming scale only after the demolition of the Babri Masjid!

The Indian Hospitality Industry is growing at the phenomenal rate of almost 9% per year – the second fastest for the Industry in the whole world. By 2019 it should be the world's second largest of its kind and hectic efforts are afoot to improve our tourist infrastructure (roads, transport, hotel rooms with the plushest of amenities), so as to meet the predicted 4% rise in visitors by 2017.

Naturally, the crores required to finance all these make it necessary that some other needs be shelved for a while (scarce resources and unlimited, growing needs!). Invariably it is taken from what could have been used for the development of rural areas or the providing of habitable dwellings for the people of the slums, who eke out a miserable and unhygienic existence in shanty towns with no medical facilities to speak of. When the needs of the "little ones" have to compete with assuring luxury facilities for Commonwealth athletes, no prizes are offered for those who can guess rightly who will come out on top as prime beneficiary.

Medical Tourism

Also known as Health Tourism, this is a relatively new concept. It involves people from all over the world coming to India for medical reasons and for relaxation. After all, our medical infrastructure and allied technology are known to be on par with that of UK, US and Europe. India is the chosen destination because costs are so much less (complex heart surgery in the US can hit 30,000 US dollars, while in India it comes to a paltry 8,000 US dollars). The number of medical tourists coming to our shores is expected to rise by 27% in the period

2009 – 2012 alone and will generate additional revenues up to 2.4 billion US dollars. Besides cardiac treatment, most commonly sought after are cosmetic surgery, knee transplants and dental care. Needless to say, in India, the only persons who can afford super care at such exorbitant prices are big businessmen and their families, matinee idols, sport personalities ... and some members of the clergy, often thanks to their vow of poverty. For the average villager or slum-dweller even the most rudimentary forms of first aid would sometimes be hard to come by.

It is ironic to learn that the India Tobacco Company – despite its mandatory “Smoking is Hazardous to Health!” slogan – has learnt to cash in on the medical tourist bonanza and opened up the country’s first branded hotel, the Fortune Park Lake City, strategically near a Thane hospital!

Promotion of Tourism

Our Government is creatively and imaginatively seeking all manner of clever ways and means to lure the would-be traveller by the siren call of the exotic East. Tourist visas are being offered on arrival for citizens of Finland, Japan, Luxemburg, Singapore and New Zealand (single entry, valid for 30 days). Promotion of Night Tourism is on the charts, with 1.1 million US dollars chalked up for the illumination of monuments and buildings in Le Corbusier’s Chandigarh, alone. Advertisements for Adventure Tourism are being flashed across the screens of youth hostels the world over: there’s river-rafting, kayaking and mountain-climbing awaiting hardy youngsters in the Himalayas – fit to rival anything that the Alps or the Rockies might have to offer! The bold and the brave can try their luck at rock climbing in Madhya Pradesh or even skiing at Gul Marg and Auli (though the facilities here pale into insignificance when compared with their counterparts in the US or on the Continent. The intrepid can also venture into paragliding in Maharashtra, boat-racing in Bhopal and wind-surfing in Goa. Of course, a massive expenditure is required to keep all these expensive toys in working order ... and we all know which sections of our people will feel most of the pinch.

Tourism and Pedophilia

“We are guilty of many errors and faults,” avers Chilean poet, Gabriel Mistral. “But our worst crime is abandoning our children,

neglecting the fountain of life. Many things we need can wait. The child cannot." And here is to be found another victim for unscrupulous tourism sharks.

Some 250 million children, worldwide, have to bear the burden of uncertain survival almost as soon as they can walk. And there is no dearth of those who will cash in on these little ones, turning them into fodder for the foreign tourist – pedophile's sexual appetite.

Investigations conducted by the National Women's Commission of India have shown that some 80% of India's child prostitutes come from our Silicon City of Bangalore alone. Small children from impoverished families are lured by smuggling gangs into the flesh trade and taken to the Pedophiles' Paradises of India: Calangute, Candolim and Baga in Goa, Kovalam in Kerala or Mahabalipuram in Tamilnadu.

Government Agencies seem loath to follow up on the leads provided by the Women's Commission. Pedophilia is a lucrative business and its perpetrators and abettors know where to spread their lavish bribes.

1991, however, was a historic break-through for the Women's Commission. Freddy Peats, an Anglo-Indian was actually charged with introducing young boys, aged 6 – 16, into homosexuality, mainly for German tourists. For the first time, the whole country woke up in horror to what had long been happening in many places. But we had but touched the tip of the ice-berg.

Tourism and Destruction

Tourism was once viewed as a boon for people living in hilly or mountainous areas (popular tourist resorts because of the fresh air and picturesque landscapes): it afforded the local inhabitants a chance to augment their income without resorting to denudation of trees or erosion of the soil due to mining. However, we are beginning to realize that tourism can also carry a lot of negative and undesirable baggage.

Many popular resorts – especially in Europe and Northern America – are beginning to complain of "too much tourism"! What with the rise of "two-season tourism" in the Alpine regions, as well as the fact that the number of visitors to the Rocky Mountains has gone up 50% in the last 20 years (and still counting), many mountain communities have been led to shift from farming and grazing to more lucrative ventures associated with tourism. The increased construction of big hotels, tourist chalets and other amenities has led to the erosion of the ecosystem,

lethal harm to the wildlife habitat and heavy demands on scarce resources. Similar alarmed voices are being heard from as far apart as the Smoky Mountains of Australia and the US National Parks of Tennessee.

World mountainous areas that once were sought out by invalids and others recuperating from diseases like TB could do with a salubrious "shot in the arm" themselves! They are reportedly being stricken down with excessive tourist-related activities, causing environmental damage, soil erosion and water-scarcity. Beaches in Goa and other popular tourist coastal regions in India are being stripped of their charm and "private beaches" hinder access to the seaside – and all this is due to the proliferation of luxury hotels and tourist bungalows.

Nearer to home, among the worst hit such places are assuredly the Hindu Kush Mountains, that stretch from Myanmar and China, right across Northern India, Bhutan and Nepal, all the way to Afghanistan. (The Smoky Mountains and the Rockies are not far behind!) Massive road building has made formerly remote areas easy of access. The result is that loggers are able to encroach on what were once areas well isolated and protected. This accelerates deforestation and there have been several recent cases of accidental – and devastating – forest fires due to careless campers. Rock quarrying invariably soon follows. All these are beginning to have a cumulative negative effect on the water supply. This is a serious problem given that about half a billion people depend on water from the Ganges and the Indus, which spring from the bosom of the Himalayas.

Very often poor farmers and other hill- and mountain -dwellers in Third World countries are blamed for environmental destruction when, more often than not, it is the local or central government, with its short-sighted policies and careless planning which is the real culprit, as the UN FAO Department has often felt constrained to emphasize.

Tourism and Risk

This covers a whole gamut of issues from sun-burn (the tourist's own fault) to terrorist attacks (where he or she is the hapless, helpless victim).

Dr Stefanos Fotiou of the UN Environmental Programme offers several simple and practical guidelines to help tourist businesses deal with the more dangerous instances of such, including drawing up and

analyzing frequency charts of possible perils. The APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation) help desk has elaborated a Terrorism Risk Management Guide and training Package that can be of immense help to companies dealing with the tourist trade. It suggests ways and means to survive both natural. All tourist establishment should get in touch with these organizations and learn what to do in case of either natural disasters, like tsunamis, as also violent attacks and threats. Most tourist offices already include courses in such matters like this as part of the normal formation of their personnel.

Ecotourism

People seem to be at last seeing the light, realizing that there is need for such a thing as responsible tourism. Ecological tourism (or ecotourism) refers to the gradually emerging idea that when people travel to places of pristine and fragile beauty, an attempt must be made to impact but gently and sensitively on the region. There should also be a very conscious effort to secure the economic development of the locality as well as the empowerment of the local people. Respect for different cultures as well as concern for human rights should also be fostered.

The term, Ecotourism, was popularized in 1983 by Hector Cabellos-Lascurian, the then Director General of Standards and Technology in Mexico (the country's Ministry of Urban Development and Ecology) and founder-President of PRONATURA (an influential Mexican Conservationist NGO), in which he is still most active.

Allied to this is Responsible Tourism, another fairly recent concept that came to the fore in Thailand, in the 1990s, due to local pressure. It also promotes eco-friendly tourism, which holds that tourism should be developed in a way that minimizes any possible negative impact on local culture and, on the other hand, aims at a kind of happy symbiosis between natives and visitors. Like ecotourism, it stresses respect for individual cultures and the environment.

Personal Initiatives

Here are a few thoughtful "do's" and "don'ts" everyone should keep in mind when travelling, especially as a tourist.

DO

- carry away all non-degradable waste and place them only in municipal dustbins;

- respect the sanctity of holy sites, places of religious, historical or sentimental value;
- cover up (or bury deep) all human waste from temporary toilets, ensuring they're at least 30 metres from all water sources;
- cut down on noise pollution: let there be no loud, blaring music at picnic sites or public parks;
- respect local people's privacy: for example, don't photograph them without their permission.

DON'T

- insensitively carry away cuttings, seeds and rocks (in some places, as in the Himalayas, this can be illegal and could land one into no end of trouble): this could upset the delicate balance of eco-diversity;
- use pollutants, such as detergents, for washing and bathing, directly in rivers and streams;
- offer local people food and drink without first checking whether consumption of such items would be offensive to their culture or religion;
- use wood as fuel at cooking sites; ensure that all fires have carefully been extinguished after use; always keep some buckets of sand and/or water handy to douse any fire as soon as it gets out of control.

Some Practical Reflections

1. Hospitality is a two-way street. Just as visitors must be treated with courtesy by their hosts (which includes the locals), they must be prepared to show respect for local customs and traditions, as well as respect the delicate eco-balance of the environment.
2. It is about time that we, in India, like most Third World people, learn to get our priorities right. It is scandalous that we keep on investing unlimited funds in up-grading already posh enough facilities for the idle rich and for tourists, while we make loud mourning noises about how we would like to do something to help the poor and neglected but just don't have the funds to do so or – which is worse – ask them to bide their time as “more important” issues (tourist facilities, for instance) have to be seen to first. As if anything could have a higher priority than assuring human beings, our brothers and sisters, of their basic human rights.

3. Maybe we could take a leaf out of Raoul Follerau. He once suggested that the world indulges in "One Day's War For Peace"! By this he meant that we should pretend that we are all engaged in World War III and contribute to a central fund all that we would incur as expenses for just one single day of combat. He assured us that with the money so raised, we would be able to wipe out, once and for all, leprosy and many other ills that plague the human family. I would suggest that we pretend that we are hosting the next Olympics and spend the thousand crores or so that we would miraculously find for the job on improving the lots of our poor (housing, clean drinking water, better transport, medical facilities, schooling). This is not so forlorn a dream as some think and, with a bit of serious planning, a very different India would emerge – one that would not have the burden of slum-dwellers and emaciated villagers to hide from our foreign tourists or the next CWG (whenever that would be)!
4. Let us ensure that the stadia and the residences of the 2010 CWG do not remain unused and, to a great extent, be allowed to fall into rack and ruin (as has happened to most of the facilities of the fairly recently concluded Youth Games in Pune). They could be rented out for mega-events or tickets sold for matches played in the stadia and all this could be used for the upkeep of the facilities (if not set aside to provide the basic necessities for the rural poor and city slum dwellers). Perhaps some of the income could be used to repair the buildings and grounds of the Youth Games site in Pune which, in turn, could be used to generate income as suggested above for the CWG complex.

Conclusions

In a very real sense, we are all "tourists", for we do not have here on earth a lasting dwelling-place. Of course, I am using the word analogously, because we are earning a salary by working in a particular place and residing there for quite a long time (two dimensions that would normally disqualify one from being a tourist. All of us need to receive as well as offer hospitality. And it would be foolish to identify oneself with a narrow region or a specific city, town or village. That way of speaking would make all others, who don't trace their origins, or limit their activities, to that specific place, "foreigners" to me. And

when such provincialistic and narrow-minded groups start doing that, all manner of jingoism and racism follows. It might be a salutary thing to recall that, if we were to follow this way of speaking, everyone of us would be a foreigner almost everywhere. We must slowly begin to see ourselves as sharing in a larger human identity – not just Puneites, but Maharastrians, not just Maharashtrais, but Indians, not just Indians, but Asians, not just Asians but citizens of the World. If modernism, all too simplistically, saw us as, “basically all the same”, not taking our very differences too seriously, postmodernism would go the other extreme: it would see us all so radically different that we could have nothing in common with anybody from another nation, race or religion. This is where each of us “tourists” would require a bit of hospitality and welcome from the “locals” or “natives” of a particular place and where we must learn to show respect (“hospitality”) for the local cultures and traditions.

In other words, my responsibility does not stop with my family (even my “extended” family). It must, ultimately embrace everybody everywhere. I must seek to help everyone to become a free, happy and fulfilled human being (another way to speak of our Christian calling to build up God’s kingdom of justice, love and peace for everyone, not just for a few privileged families at the expense of other disadvantaged peoples. This is true globalization and seeks the progress and development of all people, the whole “globe”; the kind of “globalization” we have today is a sham: primarily Americanism (and to some extent Europeanisation) masquerading as globalization. Not only is another world possible: it’s our Christian responsibility.

“Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13: 1–2).

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Book Reviews

Saju Chackalackal (Editor), *New Horizons of Christian Living*, Bangalore and Coimbatore: Vidyavanam Publications and Preshita Communications, 2009, pp.932.

It is an encyclopedic volume, published as a *Festschrift* on the occasion of the 75th Birthday and the Golden Jubilee of the religious commitment of Prof. Dr. Vadakethala Francis Vineeth CMI, edited by his student Saju Chackalackal. The volume contains fifty scholarly articles, arranged in six parts. (1) Father Francis Vineeth, Person and Mission, (2) Indian Approaches to the Bible, (3) Indian Christian Theology, (4) Inculturation and the Indian Church, (5) Indian Spirituality, and (6) Indian Christian Paradigms of Philosophical Synthesis. A detailed review of this big volume is almost impossible. I only venture to highlight the six parts of this volume in a very general way.

Part I presents the person and mission of Fr. Vineeth, introduced by an article written by Vineeth himself. It is the story of his own journey in search of the Ineffable and the Absolute Truth, which finally led him to the foundation of an Indian Christian CMI Ashram in Bangalore. The complete list of the writings of Vineeth is compiled by Saju Chackalackal and presented in this part followed by a biographical sketch of 34 pages. The other articles are written by the close associates and friends of Vineeth and they highlight his craving for the mystical, his emphasis on 'knowing and becoming', his ashram movement as a 'search for the lost space' and a presentation on his Vidyavanam Ashram. Part II contains some articles related to Biblical studies. Part III has articles on Indian Christian theology, starting with the initiatives

taken by Dharmaram. Reflections on Indian Christology, Retelling the story of Jesus in India, Encountering Non-Dualism in Jesus and Buddha are some of the topics dealt with in this part.

Part IV deals with the question of inculturation in the Indian Church. A short history of Inculturation and the problems related with it, Biblical perspectives on inculturation, the problem of the pastoral care of the emigrants from the Oriental Catholic Churches in other parts of India, Interreligious fellowship in India, Indigenization of music in liturgy, and Contributions of Christians in the socio-economic and cultural areas are some of the topics in this part. Part V deals with the major topic of Indian Spirituality. Many important topics, such as, experience, sannyasa, priesthood, priestly spirituality, Christian holistic spirituality, spiritual formation, mystical experience, interiority, Ashram spirituality, spiritual direction, a spirituality in tune with nature, etc. are discussed in this part. Part VI contains articles in the area of Indian Christian Paradigms of Philosophical Synthesis. Topics like religious experience, Yoga, role of speculative philosophy, Indian Christian art, Gandhian thought, symbolism, spirituality of Gita, are discussed in this part.

“Knowing” and “Becoming” are the two main keys for understanding the person and work of Fr. Vineeth and the major contributions in this volume. In the first part of his life Fr. Vineeth focused his life on knowing and teaching what he has known and learned. But then he realized that what is more important is “becoming” what one knows and learns. This is the reason why he in the second part of his life launched an Ashram and tried to help others in the process of ‘becoming’.

This volume is a good reference book on various topics related with Indian theology and Indian spirituality. Dr. Saju Chackalackal CMI, the editor of this volume, deserves special congratulations for meticulously planning, editing and executing it with utmost care, precision and beauty. The printers also have done a very good job. I wish the book a wide reception and its readers a very fruitful and rewarding time.

Kuncheria Pathil

Gloria Patmury, *Church in Asia: Amid the Many Poor and the Many Religions*, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2008. pp.164.

The book is an in-depth study of the writings of Aloysius Pieris S.J., the famous Sri Lankan theologian, who is well known for his Asian theology of liberation. In contrast to the Latin American liberation theology which focuses exclusively on the poverty of the people and its response on the part of the Christian Gospel, Aloysius Pieris pointed out the positive role of Asian religions in the life and development of the Asian people. The age-old religions of Asia had inspired millions of Asians and still do so, and their role is very essential and significant for the liberation of the Asian people. Asian religions therefore should not consider themselves as rivals, but as partners of dialogue for a common mission.

The author Gloria Patmury was born in South Korea in a Buddhist family, but became a disciple of Jesus during her adolescence. She is now pastor of a Presbyterian Church and the head of an Ashram and lives in a remote village in Karnataka, near Kolar, with her Indian husband, Joseph Patmury, a theologian and ecologist. This book is originally written as a Doctoral Dissertation at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore, and was guided by the present reviewer.

The book is written in five small chapters. The first chapter introduces the life, work and writings of Aloysius Pieris. The post-Colonial situation of poverty in Sri Lanka, Jesuit contextual formation, studies abroad, specialization in Asian religions, especially, Buddhism and Hinduism, and the interest and study in Marxism, all these, contributed to the vision and thinking of Aloysius Pieris and for the development of his Asian theology of liberation. The second chapter deals with the analysis of Aloysius Pieris on Asia's poverty and the meaning of the Good News for Asia's poor. Excessive accumulation of wealth by some people is the root cause of abject poverty and the misery of the poor. Pieris' analysis boils down to two points, *voluntary poverty and forced poverty*. Voluntary poverty, practiced in the Asian religions, is the seed of liberation, whereas the forced poverty is the

fruit of sin, the result of the greed of some people and their worship of *Mammon*.

In chapter three the author presents Pieris' theology of religious pluralism and its underlying philosophy and theology of religion. In Asia religion is not a department of life, but something that permeates the whole life. There is both sin and grace in every religion. Religion has the potential to liberate and when it gets institutionalized has the tendency to enslave. The interrelationship among the religions is examined and Pieris calls for a relationship of collaboration and dialogue for the common mission of liberation. Chapter four is the heart of the book, where the author relates the two main issues, poverty and religion. The overwhelming poverty of the Asian people and Asia's rich religious traditions are brought together to develop an authentic Asian theology of liberation. Voluntary poverty, the conquering of one's tendency for greed and accumulation of wealth, is essentially related to the core of religious experience. Besides this, all religions must put all their resources together to fight against imposed poverty and human misery. This is the meaning of interreligious dialogue in Asia.

Chapter five, which is the concluding chapter, sums up the thought of Pieris and offers some comments, both positive and negative. Any authentic theology in Asia must take seriously the two realities, Asia's overwhelming poverty and Asia's many authentic religions, and build up a genuine theology by relating them and in dialogue with them.

The book is a very beautiful introduction to the ideas and contributions of Aloysius Pieris; it is clearly written and well articulated. What struck me very much is the two basic Biblical principles enunciated by Aloysius Pieris in his writings: *God's irrevocable covenant with the poor and the irreconcilable antinomy between God and Mammon*. I strongly recommend that this book be read and studied by all students of theology, who aspire to become ministers of the Good News in Asia and those who want to understand the trends of theologizing in Asia. I congratulate the author and wish the readers an enjoyable and very profitable time.

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